



THE MAKING OF

CURIOUS EXPEDITION



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CURIOS EXPEDITION

Digital Version 1.0

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Contact: info@maschinen-mensch.com

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Edition I
Berlin, 2018

FOREWORD BY RON GILBERT

As a game designer, every so often I play a game and my response is “I wish I would have thought of that”. Curious Expedition was one of those game. I primarily design and make adventure games and to me they have always been about exploration, so it’s obvious why this game struck me as it did.

I’m also a huge fan of pixel art. A lot of people today look at pixel art and think “retro”, but well done pixel art goes so far beyond that. Pixel art isn’t about reliving limitations, it’s about celebrating the power of those limitations. Very few artists doing pixel art today are truly constrained to its historical technical limitations, instead they strive to capture a feeling with the art. It’s a feeling of a bygone era, an era where we were far more innocent and naive. It’s simplicity brings us a comforting charm.

Like any art form, it evolves and grows. The simple pixels of 30 years ago have matured into a true art form capable of expressing emotions and feelings, not due to technical changes, but due to the exploration of the art form and understanding it’s depth.

I look at Curious Expedition and I see that same desire to explore, not just to world found in the game, but the art form of pixels and to recapture a charm and innocence.

FOREWORD BY PIOTR IWANICKI, SUPERHOT

I first encountered Curious Expedition in a peculiar time in my life. I was deeply working on a game of my own. Curious Expedition lured me in from the first time I've heard about it. The travel, the XIX century, the far-away lands, the jungle adventures, the Quest for the Golden Pyramid. This premise captured a feeling of the things I longed for during the endless days at the desk, working on my first big game. It felt like tailor made escapism, just for me.

At the same time, it wasn't escapism at all. When you're making a game, or creating anything, you're going on a journey. Result is not certain - that's why they call it an adventure. Maybe you'll never reach the Golden Pyramid, maybe you'll get lost in the wildlands. Lots of projects end up as failed dreams and broken promises and that's a burden you carry. Daily. Once the crisis is over you just talk about „obstacles you overcame“. During those weak moments though, you think of a lonely skeleton near the remains of a fireplace - clinging to diary of game concepts that may never turn real.

Playing Curious Expedition was my personal meditation on this theme. While being deep into my own work during the week, I phased out completely during weekends. I played Curious Expedition like I was back in high school, like there was no tomorrow. I explored. The world ceased to exist. I ceased to exist - there were only tiny pixel people traveling through the hex world and diary notes marking their deepening insanity. This felt weirdly safe. The on-screen insanity

helped me catching distance, like an interactive comfort. When I started playing Curious Expedition it was bare-bones alpha, even before the Early Access release. No dice-based fight system, no dinosaurs (!), no Arctic Adventure. I loved it. I watched the game grow and returned with every update for another expedition, once again to see my hours disappear like minutes.

You often say this about music: „this song was soundtrack to my childhood!“. I feel like this when it comes to games. Curious Expedition was „my“ game. If you're reading this, it may be that it's also „yours“: complete with all your memories of expeditions won and lost, complete with all the time you've spent with it. Games are for players to „own“ them.

This small book presents the other side of the game's story. The excitement of creation, the tradeoffs, the doubt and work and work and work: you'll feel them between the pictures.

Read it like a diary from an expedition. A successful one.

FOREWORD BY MASCHINEN-MENSCH

Much like the characters in our game we decided to go on an adventurous journey when we left our former AAA jobs to go indie. And much like the protagonists in our game, we didn't quite know what we were getting ourselves into. We approached everything with a sense of curious naivety and optimism, but development turned out to be quite hard. We came close to using that hot air balloon rescue multiple times, but managed to keep venturing. Thankfully we ended up not alone on our journey, but encountered many new friends and most importantly: you.

In this book you see a glimpse of what we've created in the last couple of years. This game fills us with special pride, because it is an amalgamation of not only the media that we've consumed while researching this game, but also of numerous movies, books and comics that we grew up with. It's a joy to contribute our humble share into the creative sphere and if we are lucky maybe someday somebody might be a little inspired by it, like we were inspired by so many before us.

When we started being interested in a game that is set during the Victorian era we started enveloping ourselves in that period. Quickly many problematic aspects of that time surfaced: exploitation, racism, sexism, imperialism. And even though the characters of our game are not military invaders or settlers, they are part of the system and often directly or indirectly benefiting from it.

We knew that we didn't want to let our game play out in a whitewashed version of that scenario. We also felt that we didn't want to scold the player for their actions, because we think there is much more power in a subversive approach. A trick which only interactive media can use when confronting these topics: making the player feel guilty for their own actions and through their own volition. There has been an ongoing rift in the video game world if games should handle political messages at all. We fall on the side of seeing games as capable of going beyond escapism and as suited to give social, cultural or political commentary if the creator wants to. A huge thanks to you and to all our supporters. Without you our dream of doing this small game wouldn't have been possible.

Yours,
Riad & Johannes



Image by Julian Dasgupta

CONTENTS

Landscape backgrounds	11
Locations	25
Biomes	49
Characters	65
Procedural natives	73
Animals & Monsters	81
Visual evolution	85
Field tiles	99
Changelogs & Designs	107
Layout Evolution	135
Abandoned features	145
Moments of development	157
Alpha Updates	165

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Printed in Berlin, Germany

First Printing, 2018

www.maschinen-mensch.com



LANDSCAPE BACKGROUNDS

On the following pages you will see a collection of the raw backgrounds that are shown when the player is visiting a location. Each background is based on the type of field the location is placed on. From all the graphical effort, these background images were the most demanding creations. Not only are they made up by a lot of pixels that have to be filled, but coming up with the style and types of landscapes was essential to finding the visual identity for The Curious Expedition.



Top: Drylands
Bottom: Swamp

Top: Hill (by Rafal Fedro)
Bottom: Desert cactus



Top: Desert stone forest
Bottom: Desert



Top: Shallow river
Bottom: Scorched earth



Top: Grasslands stone forest
Bottom: Arctic Plateau

Top: Corrupted stone forest
Bottom: Corrupted shallow river



Top: Mushroom forest
Bottom: Shallow river night

Top: Grasslands
Bottom: Thick jungle



Top: Arctic deep snow
Bottom: Arctic crystal forest



Top: Arctic pack ice
Bottom: Arctic frozen plains



Top: Arctic snow forest
Bottom: Swamp night



Top: Shallow sulfur river
Bottom: Drylands stone forest



LOCATIONS

Locations are one of the core features of the game. Each location has at least one very specific role in gameplay, allowing players to develop a strategy and work against the deadly force of randomness that is constantly trying to kill them. Choosing which location to visit, and which better to skip, soon turned out to be one of the essential questions the player has to tackle constantly. Locations have to work on multiple different landscape backgrounds, which required precise planning when creating their layout and colorization.



Top: Pyramid grasslands
Bottom: Pyramid drylands



Top: Pyramid desert
Bottom: Pyramid arctic



Top: Sacrificial altar
Bottom: Shipwreck



Top: Corrupted altar
Bottom: Arctic shipwreck



Top: Native village
Bottom: Bedouin village

Top: Lizard village
Bottom: Arctic village



Top: Waterfall

Bottom: Healing springs (by Rafal Fedro)

Top: Mission (by Rafal Fedro)

Bottom: Arctic healing springs



Top: Stone statue
Bottom: Old camp (by Rafal Fedro)



Top: Stone circle
Bottom: Arctic old camp (by Octavi Navarro Torras)



Top: Arctic station (by Octavi Navarro Torras)
Bottom: Mammoth graveyard

Top: Arctic station at night (by Octavi Navarro Torras)
Bottom: Arctic camp (by Octavi Navarro Torras)



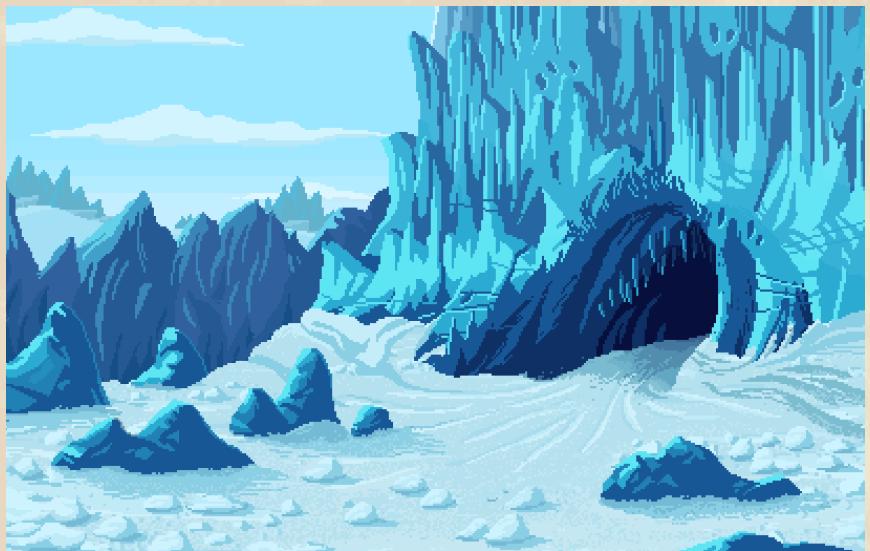
Top: Elephant graveyard
Bottom: Cenote

Top: Portal
Bottom: Cenote at night



Top: Shrine
Bottom: Shrine interior

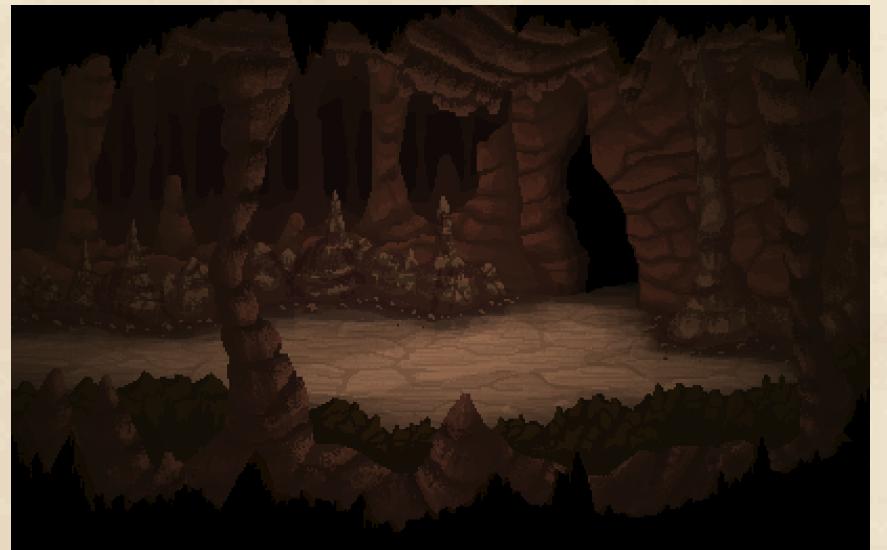
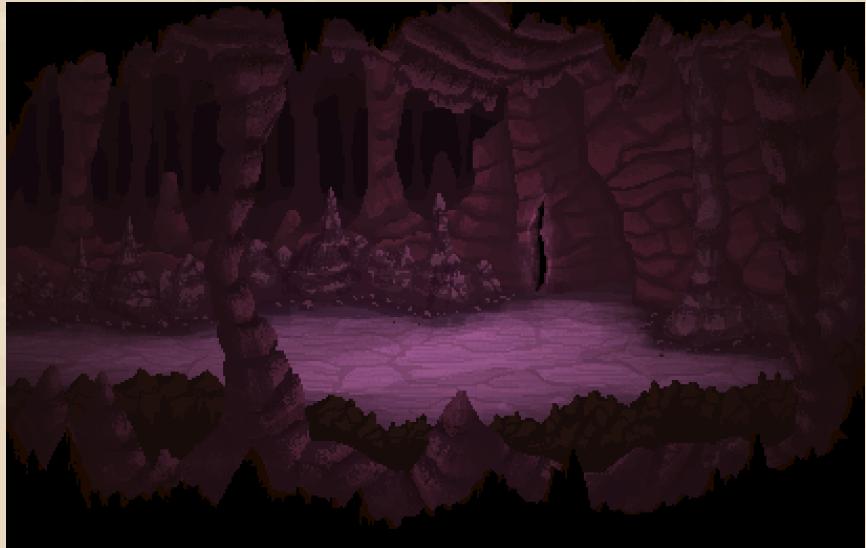
Top: Arctic shrine (by Octavi Navarro Torras)
Bottom: Arctic shrine interior (by Octavi Navarro Torras)



Top: Arctic cave entrance (by Octavi Navarro Torras)
Bottom: Standard cave entrance

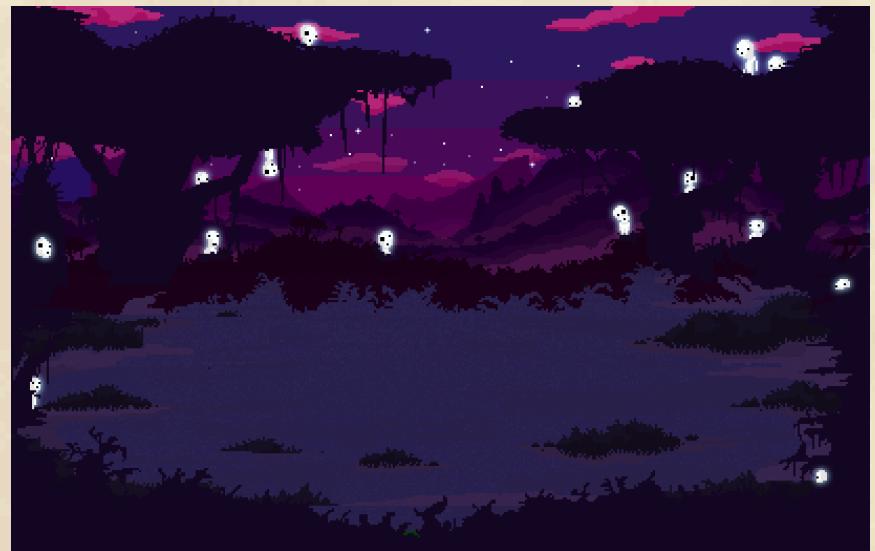
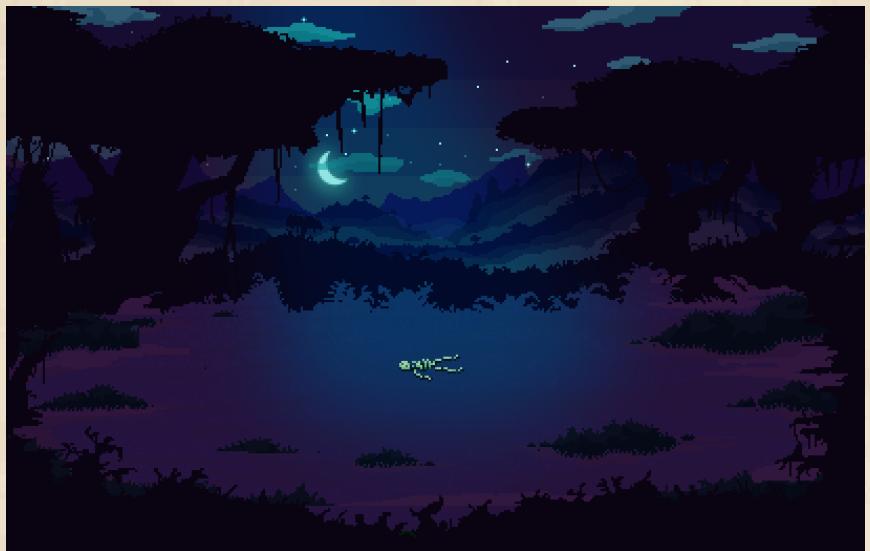


Top: Corrupted cave entrance
Bottom: Temple of blessing



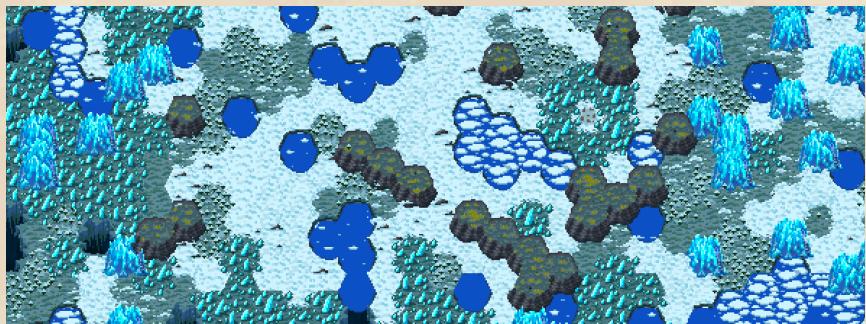
Top: Deathhole cave
Bottom: Underground lake cave

Top: Mummy cave
Bottom: Tunnel cave



Top: Explorer's club exterior
Bottom: Game Over

Top: Harbor ship
Bottom: Spirits visit



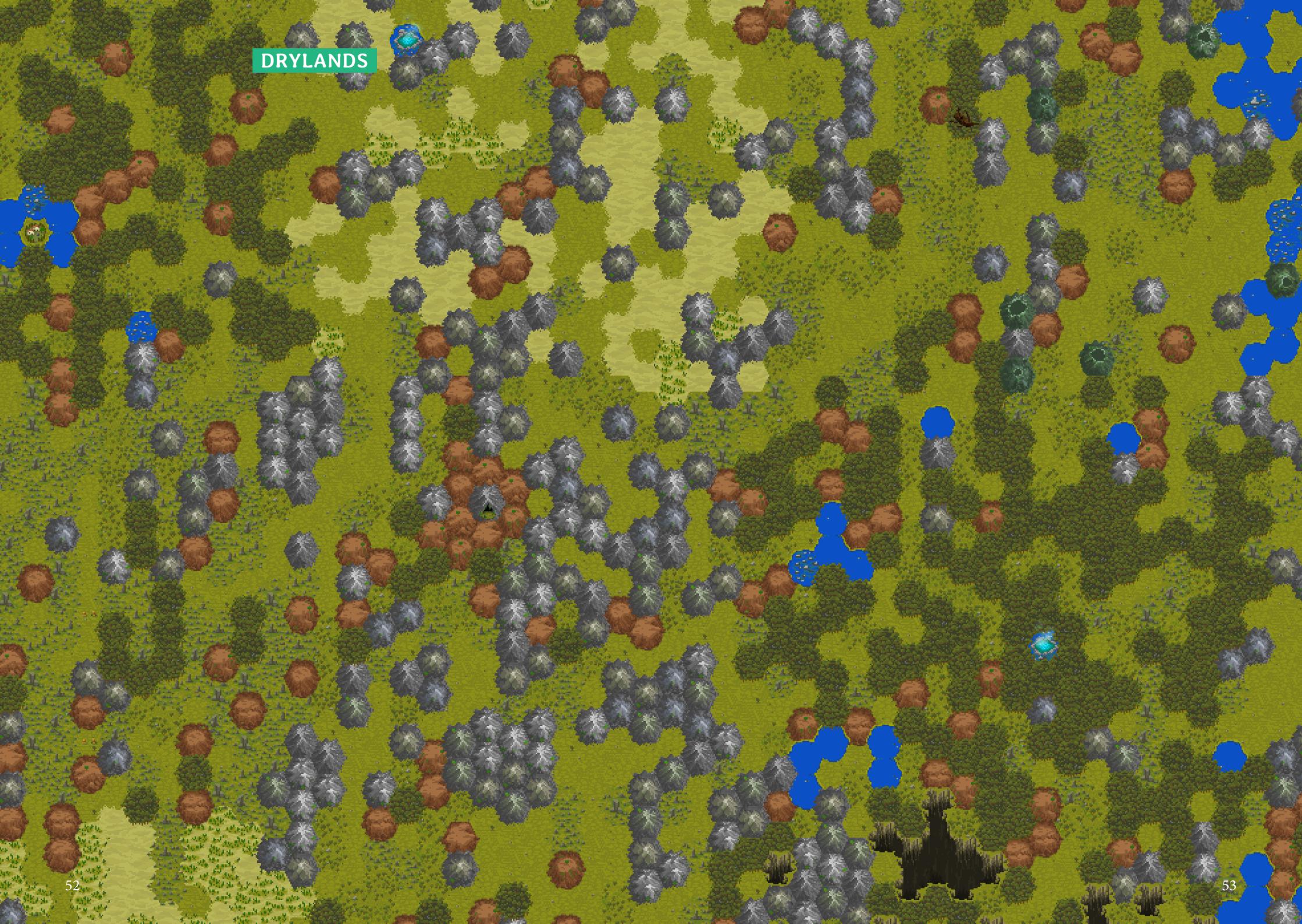
BIOMES

The heart of our world generation are our Biome types. These distinctive landscape types are based on a perlin noise with multiple variants. Alone the grasslands biome has 7 different variations which are picked based on the difficulty and progress of the player. Working on the different tunings to shape our generated worlds was one of the most fulfilling design tasks I have ever experienced. Even though the basic idea of using a perlin noise was rather simple, with the additional control of placing locations that influenced the surrounding landscape it was possible to create a vast range of different environments that not only looked, but also played in different and interesting ways.

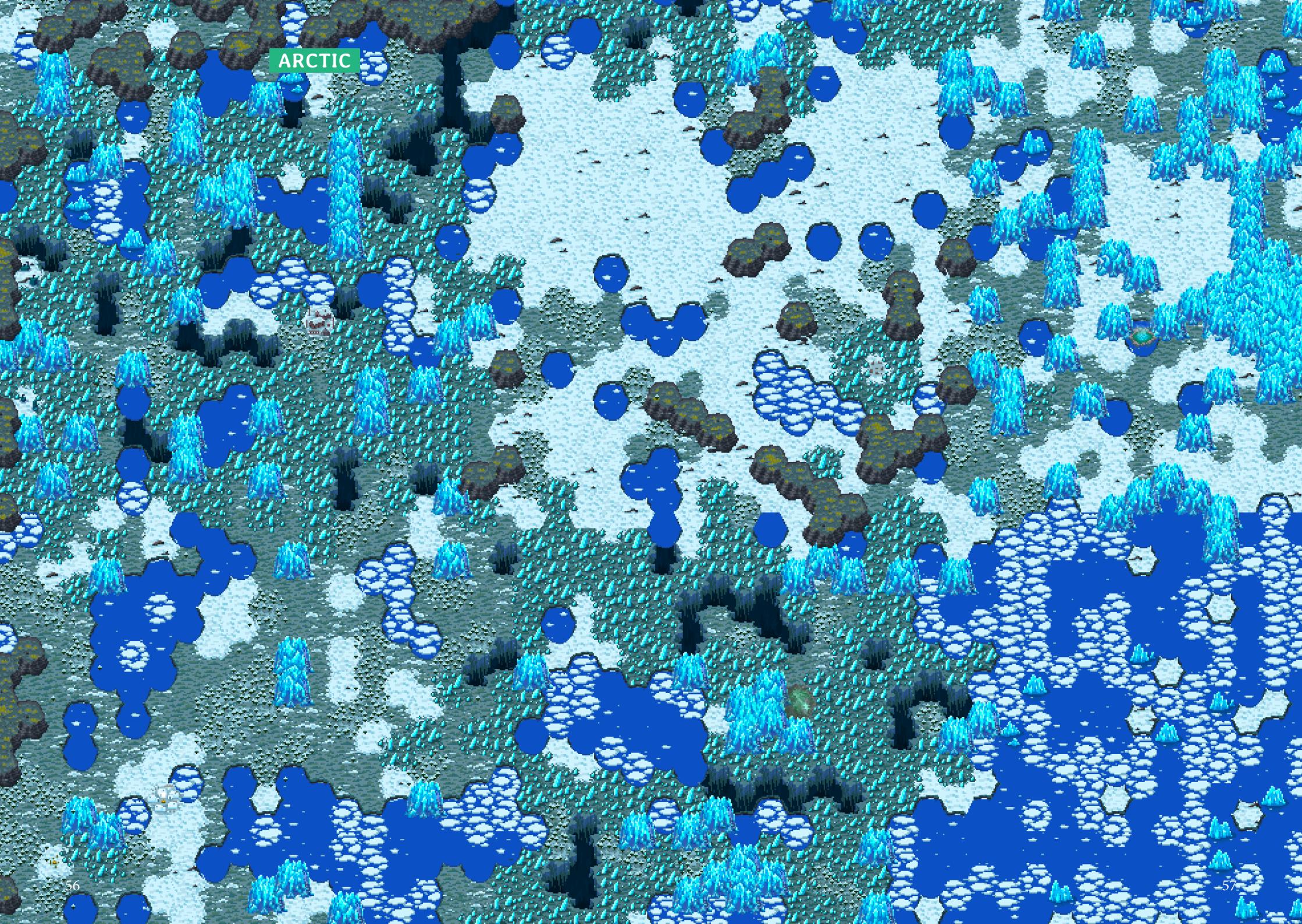
GRASSLANDS



DRYLANDS





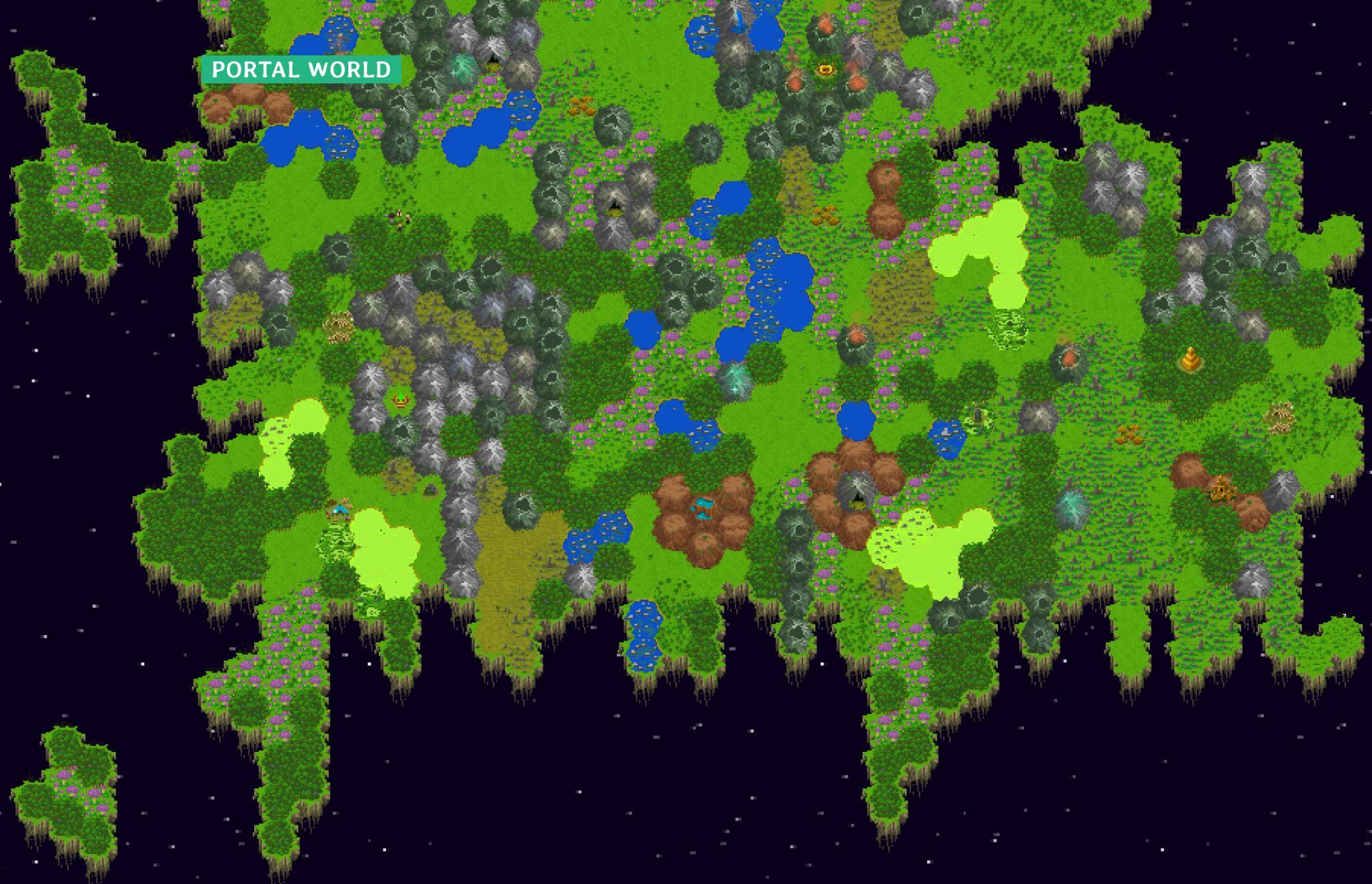


PREHISTORIC



CORRUPTED

PORTAL WORLD





CHARACTERS

We put an incredible amount of effort into the generation of our gameworld, the procedural storytelling or the selection of items and locations the player would encounter. But nothing helped our game come to life as much as the characters that the player would learn to love and hate, to get angry or laugh at and most importantly, remember.

MAIN EXPLORER

When we first started talking about a main character to lead the expedition we were only thinking in terms of profession such as Botanist, Hunter or Anthropologist. However, when we posted a mockup showing Nikola Tesla frying some Hyenas with a death ray we had our first social media moment.



Richard F. Burton

People seemed to be really into this concept and the image spread far beyond our usual reach. It was because of this reaction that we had the idea of having only famous personalities of the 19th century as expedition leaders. This simple twist turned out to be one of the main hooks of The Curious Expedition, and attracted a lot of additional attention to our game. Sure, many of them would have never embarked on an expedition into unknown lands, some even had a hard time leaving their house, but this aspect made it even more interesting. In addition, it was just a lot of fun to try and resemble their looks as close as possible.



Mary Kingsley



Amelia Earhart



Marcus Garvey



Huang Feihong



A. David-Neel



Dion Fortune



Freya Stark



Isabella Bird



Harriet Tubman



Ada Lovelace



Charles Darwin



H.P. Lovecraft



Johan Huizinga



Roald Amundsen



Frederick C. Selous



Nikola Tesla



Aleister Crowley



Marie S. Curie

TREK MEMBERS

From a mechanics standpoint, a trek member basically acts like a branch of a skill-tree in a traditional RPG. The small difference in The Curious Expedition is that they can die, develop a hang for cannibalism or cause all kinds of other mischief. We liked the idea of infusing

a lot of personality into these characters and have the likeliness of them dying a gruesome death pretty high. Their personalities and flaws, based on the player's decisions, is the secret ingredient that makes our generative storytelling work like it does.



British Soldier



Missionary



Missionary



Missionary



Persian Translator



Persian Translator



Cook



Cook



Sailor



Parsi Trader



Scottish Soldier



James Sterling



Native Scout



Native Scout



Animal Handler



Animal Handler



Animal Handler



Bedouin



Bedouin



Animal Handler



Animal Handler



Tim Timster



Artist



Artist



Native Shaman



Yeti



Cultist



Mountain Trooper



Mountain Trooper



Mountain Trooper



Cultist



Cultist



Cultist



Missing Husband



Native Warrior



Native Warrior



Cultist



Cultist



Cultist



Abomination



Lizard Shaman



Lizard Scout



PROCEDURAL NATIVES

Whenever someone asks me what aspect of Curious Expedition I am most proud about I usually tell them about the procedural natives. Even though based on a rather simple system of overlaying layers, the game is capable of generating enough variety that no player will ever encounter the very same tribe. Every time I watch a Let's Play or play the game myself I am curious to see what kind of natives I will encounter. But they're far from completely random, as one tribe shares similarities like their skin tone, clothing, hairstyle or similar eye or nose shapes.





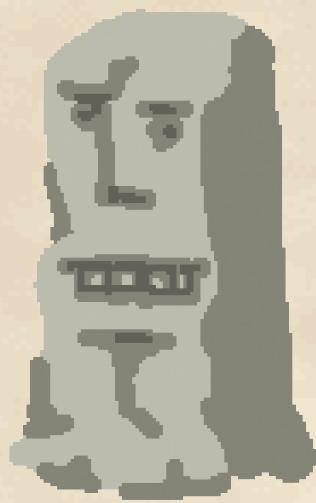




ANIMALS & MONSTERS

Initially we thought of a purely mechanical role for the animals in the player's trek. However, we soon realized how much potential these donkeys, dogs and giant tortoises had to become something the players would greatly care for during their expeditions. With the simple trick of introducing names and gender for the animals they all of a sudden became one of the most emotional aspect of our game, especially when dire situations ask the players to do what is necessary with their beloved animal companion. The monsters were great fun to come up with, and of course we took inspiration from many directions when deciding on which animal the player would face. The giant crab and bird, for example, are direct references to Journey to the Center of the Earth, the 1959 adventure film by Charles Brackett.

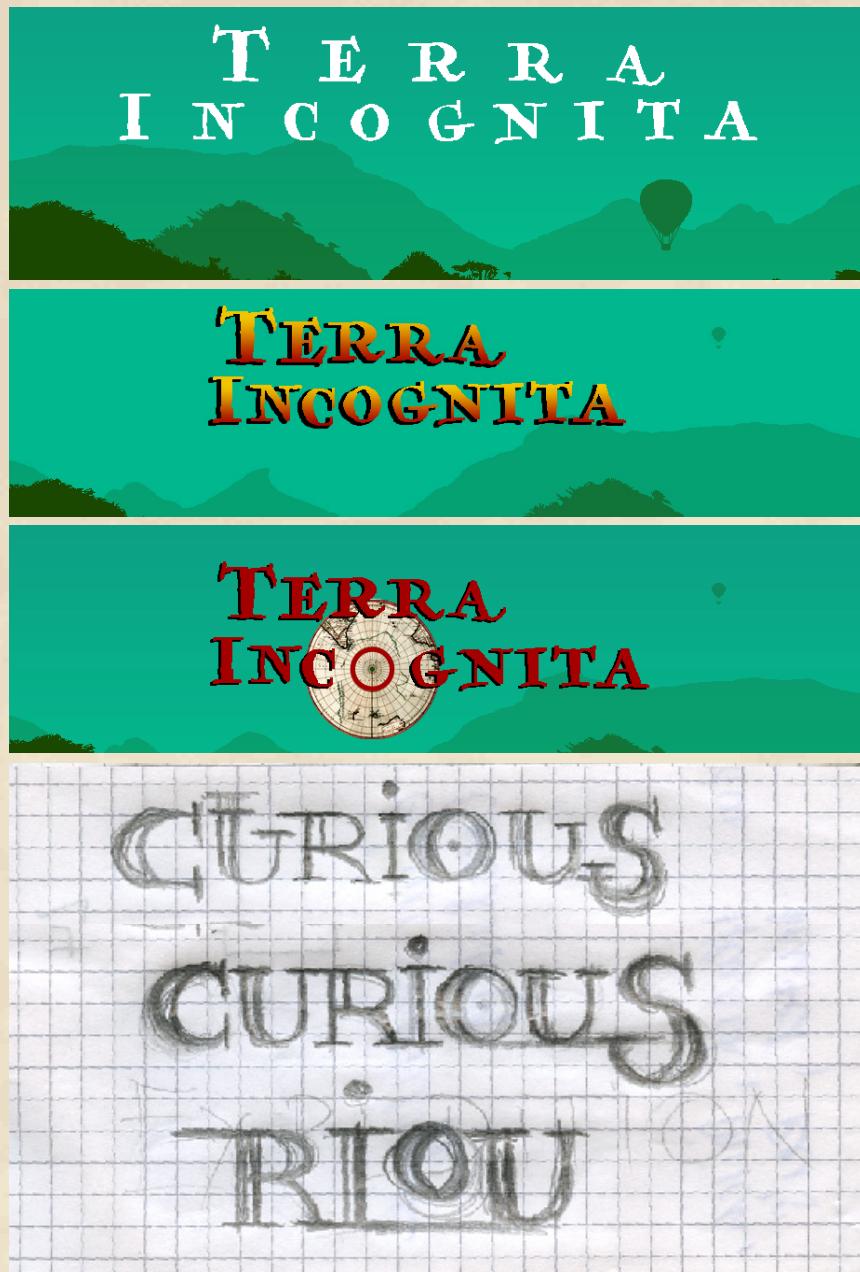




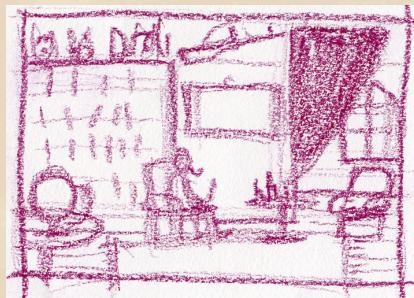
VISUAL EVOLUTION

One fear never left me during the first years; what if I would never be able to create the art I wanted, that our game needed? So far I hadn't done anything even close to the scope of what was ahead. But while being plagued by self-doubts I did something that helped a lot: I just started doing. I went through the list of images that had been piling up on my to-do and painted away. Rough and ugly, with not more than 5 minutes per piece I rushed through, and eventually everything was visualized. Some pieces would end up in early articles about the game or were pointed out as Windows Paint quality, but having at least a shitty version of everything broke down this barrier or being unsure. Then, one after one I became capable enough to replace the ugly placeholders with beautiful art. It meant a lot of exercise and trying, but the most important thing was - starting.

LOGO DESIGN



EXPLORERS CLUB LIBRARY

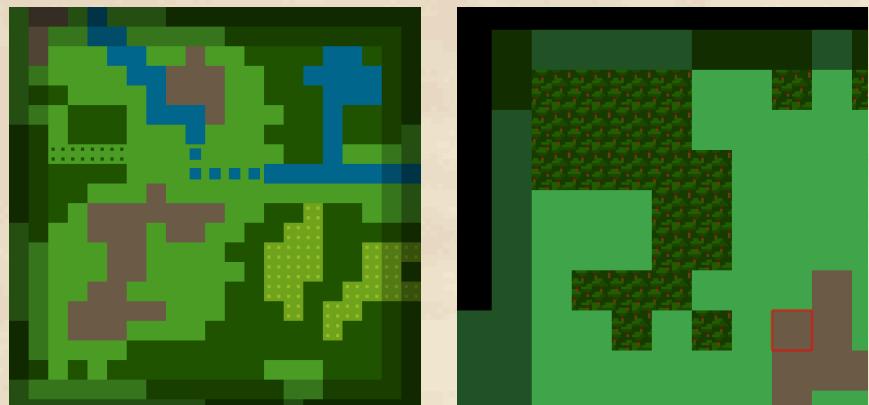


A rich, former explorer, sitting in the extravagant library of the explorer's club was an early image we had for our game. It was a major influencer of the general tone and humor of our game, and we kept iterating on it throughout the whole production.



FIELD TILES

Obviously the look of our field tiles played a massive role in finding the visual identity for our whole game. One of the hardest aspects for them was to get the scale right. While we wanted to show as many environmental details as possible we also imagined the view of the player



to be very zoomed out. The initial idea was to have the world look like one of these map-traveling screens from RPGs, but instead of being a mere transition it would be the main gameplay perspective.

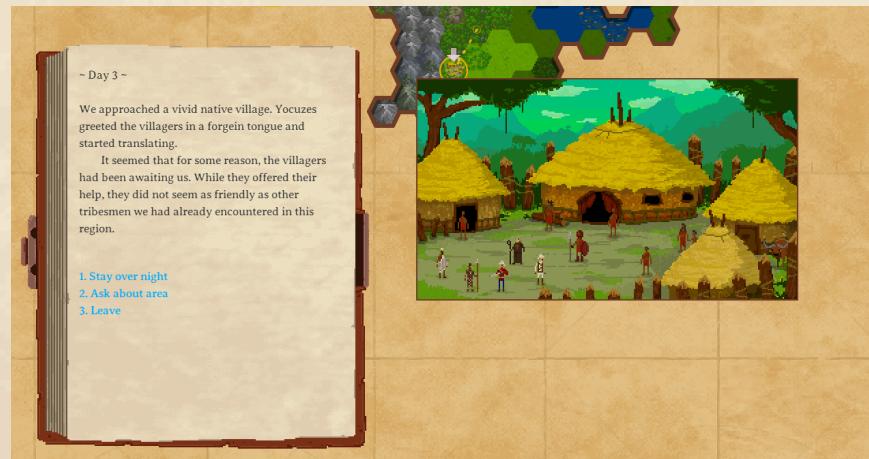
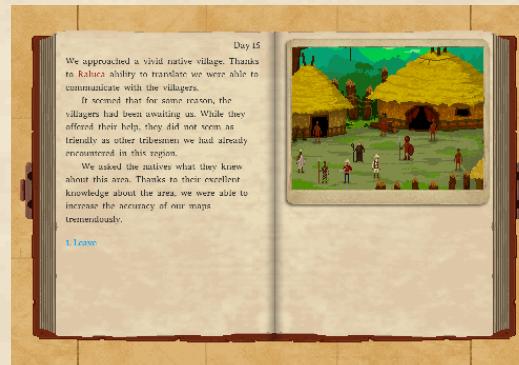
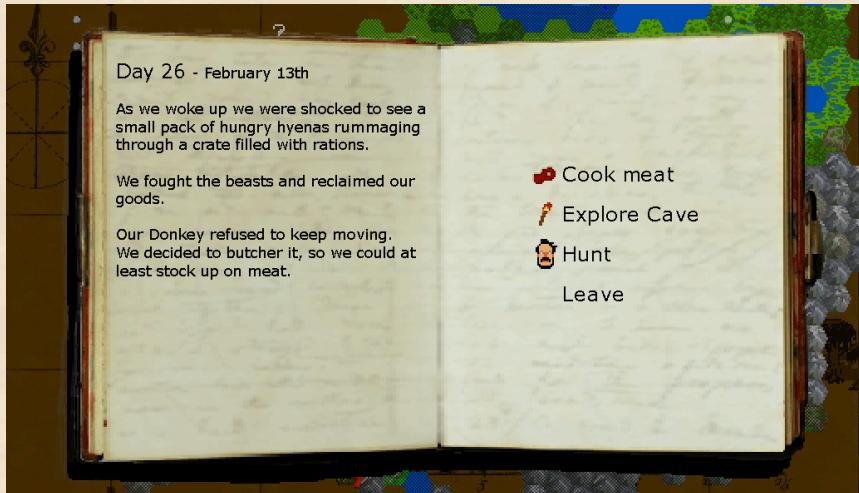
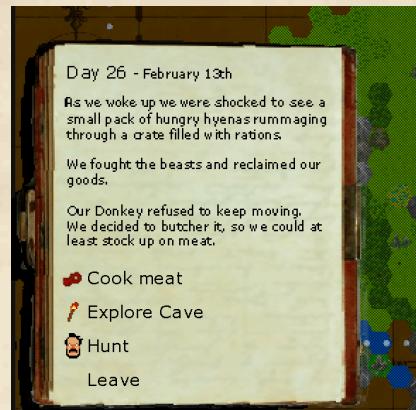


While we continuously kept iterating on the look of the tiles, the most drastic change occurred when we decided to go with a hexagonal grid. All of a sudden the world looked much more organic. A nice side effect was that with the travel distance was the same in every direction.

TRAVEL JOURNAL

Initially we thought that our text events would play a rather small, mechanical role and just be displayed similar to a traditional roguelike in a simple textbox somewhere on screen. However, the more we worked on the game and the locations the player would visit, the more prominent both the interactions

and the display of the events became. Eventually we had the idea to show the events in a travel journal that was written by the player's main explorer. This idea of an imperfect, subjective retelling of the events became one of the essential tricks of our generative storytelling.



PLACEHOLDER VS. FINAL ART



Top: Waterfall placeholder
Bottom: Waterfall final



Top: Grasslands placeholder
Bottom: Grasslands final



Top: Stone circle placeholder
Bottom: Stone circle final



Top: Drylands placeholder
Bottom: Drylands final



FIELD TILES

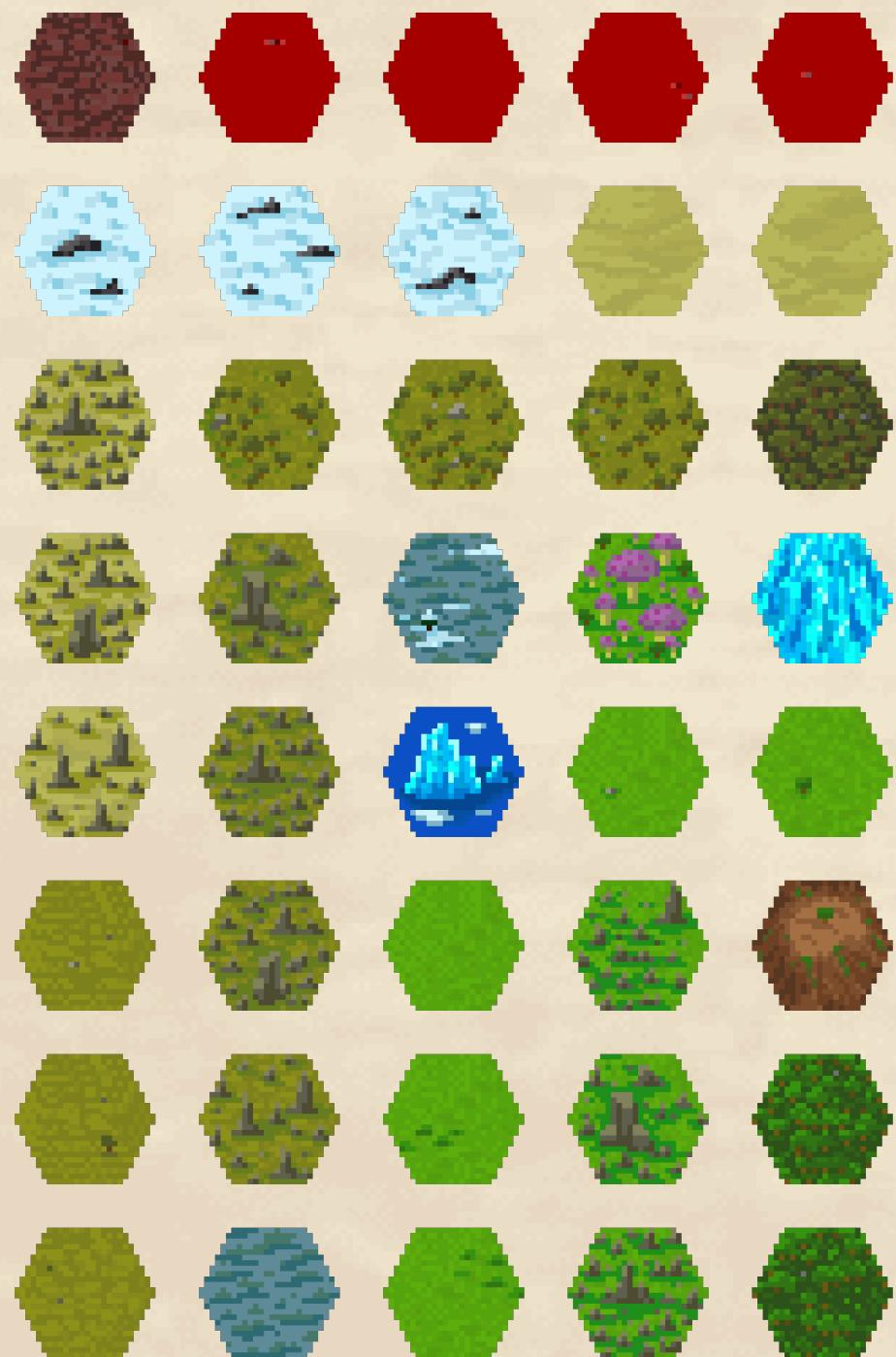
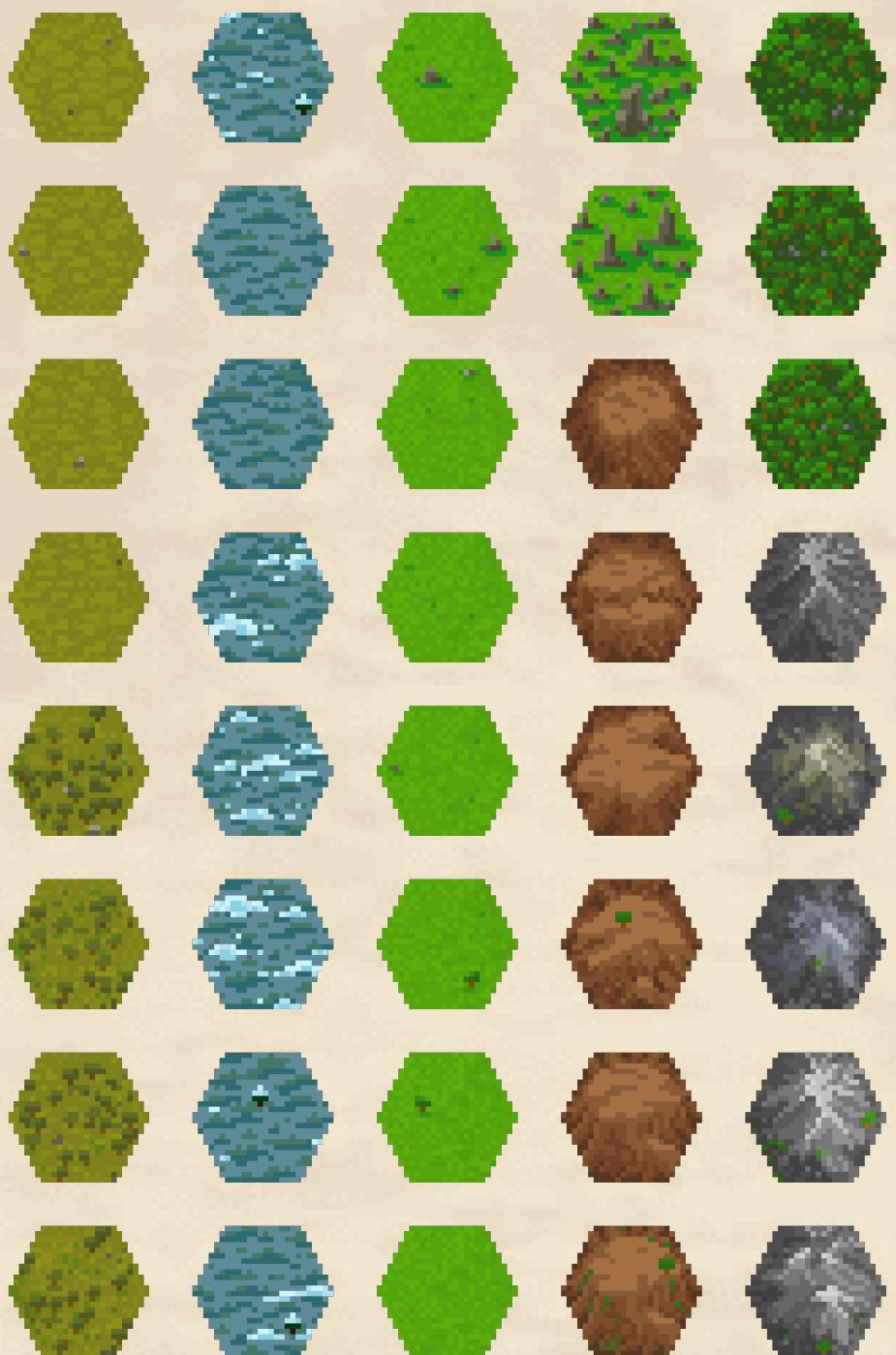
Creating the field tiles was a very special task for many reasons. We wanted to convey an area of an one-day travel within the space of 26 x 24 pixels, while preserving a strong readability of what kind of landscape it represents. Then, the different types needed to fit together to form a biome, and in the best case, fit to completely other tiles from different biomes. It was a great effort and required a lot of back and forth between tuning the generation and working on the sprites. But once a tile and it's generation started to work it always felt like magic. In their sum, the field tiles worked in ways I could barely anticipate. It felt like these worlds had their own will and with every completed tile we added another piece to a tiny, infinite world inside our computers.

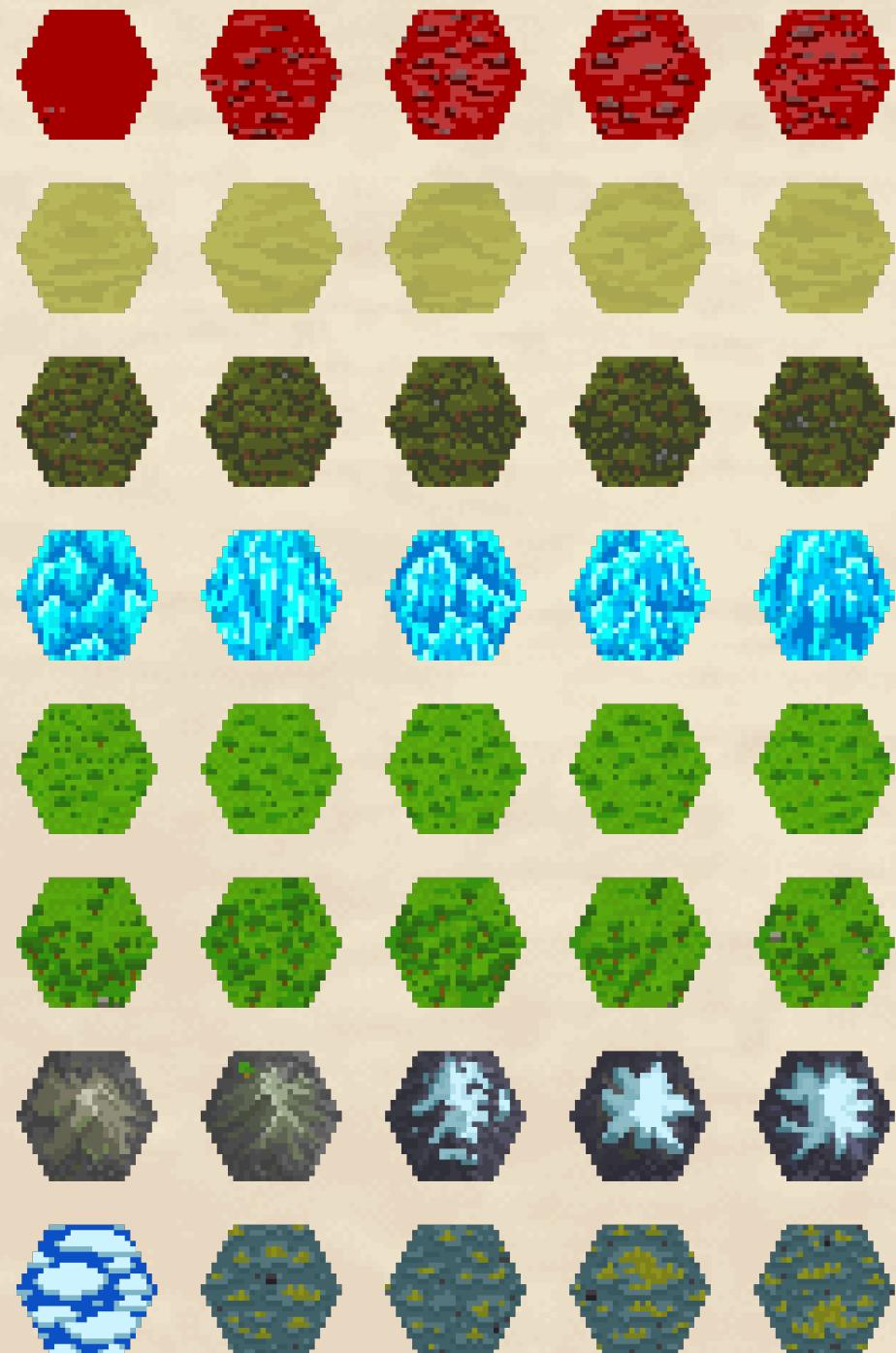
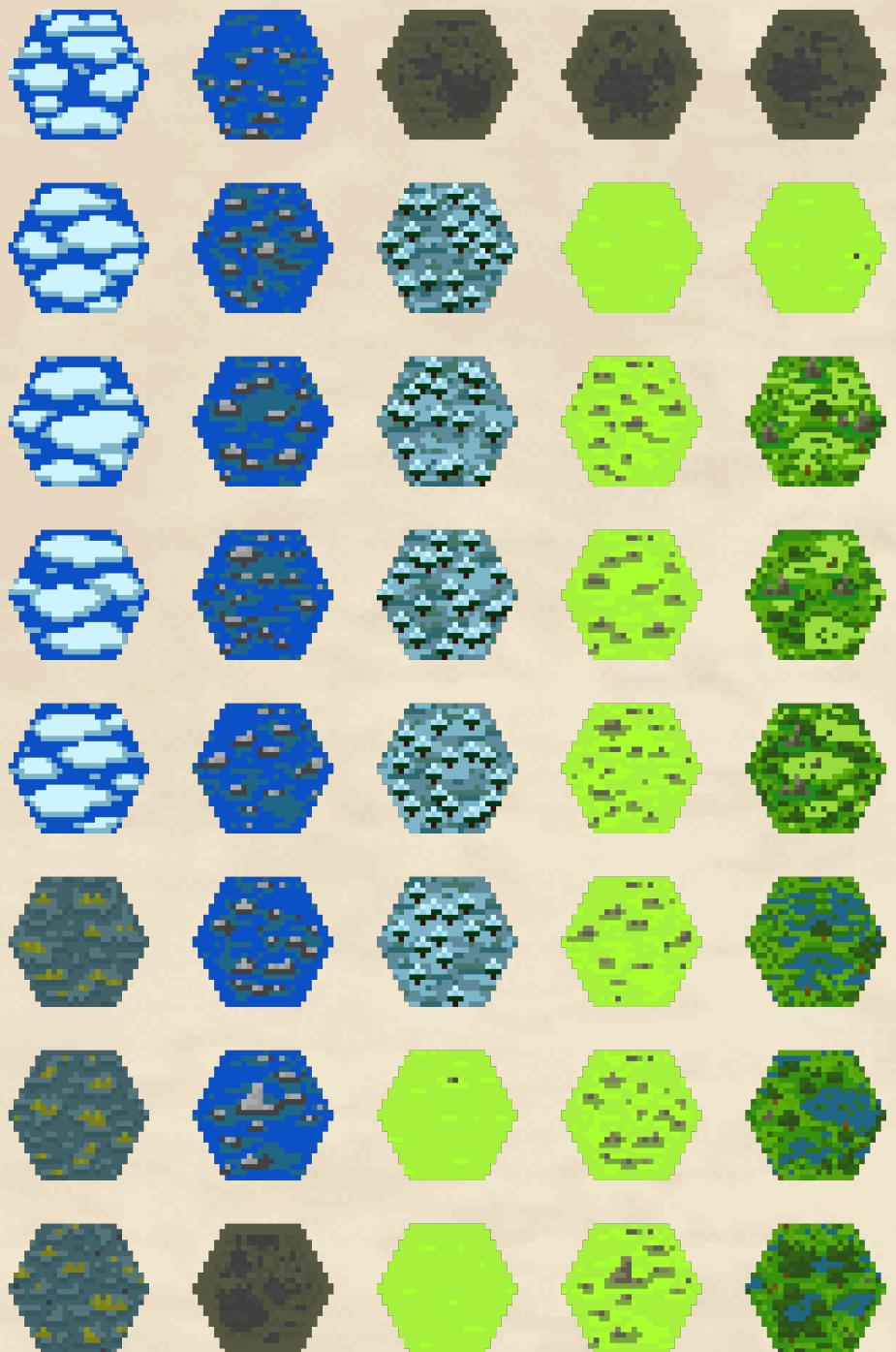


100



101







Oh wow, that's a lot of stuff.
I'll take a close look at everything.

AWESOME!

CHANGELOGS & DESIGNS

During the early years of our development we used a secret, never publicly available blog to communicate ideas, designs and changelogs to each other. This was necessary, as we worked remotely from our individual living rooms until 2016. All in all we had 561 posts spanning across 3 years. Looking back at these early discussions it is very interesting to see that many of them were laying ground for features or aspects of the game that are now an essential part of the final version. The following pages are raw outtakes of this blog, either in the form of a changelog or a design document.

MAY 30TH, 2012
POSTED BY RIAD



Changes

Added support for events. Events are the result of actions or random tile chance (to be implemented).

Events are identifiable by their id and can be reused with different actions

All the resource changing attributes of actions have been moved to events

Events can have a custom text

There can be multiple events associated with an action. If multiple are available the event will be randomly chosen according to its specified chance.

Added a info dialogue on top of the game board (currently always shown at the top area of the map)

The dialogue shows the outcome of events

First click will remove the dialogue again

Reduced size and content of the diary box

Moved day time to the labels on top of the map
Removed visible tile edge detection and special shaded rendering
Fixtures with consumed actions are now grayed out on the map (e.g. looted temples)
Removed risk attribute from tiles (will be re-added as part of the events system)

I'm looking forward to seeing some fun events, Jo. :)



Oh wow, that's a lot of stuff.
I'll take a close look at everything.
AWESOME!

JUNE 2ND, 2012
POSTED BY RIAD



```
    tagDiff: {radius: 4, added: ['tag-hostile'], removed: ['t'], {
      id: 'evt-expl-large',
      text: "What an impressive place! The treasures that were
goldDiff: 50,
tagDiff: {radius: 5, added: ['tag-cursed', 'tag-hostile']}
}, {
  id: 'evt-expl-death-1',
  text: "A Trap! Immediately after entering the ruins one o
porterDiff: -1,
tagDiff: {radius: 4, added: ['tag-hostile'], removed: ['t
}, {
  id: 'evt-expl-death-2',
  text: "This place is deadly! One porter was beheaded, whi
porterDiff: -2,
tagDiff: {radius: 4, added: ['tag-hostile'], removed: ['t
}, {
  id: 'evt-refill-water',
  text: "We refilled our water.",
waterDiff: 100
}, {
  id: 'evt-refill-water-bad',
  text: "While refilling our water one of our porters was b
waterDiff: 100,
```

After seeing some of the fun new events I felt motivated to add some longer lasting effects. I hacked up a system which will hopefully be useful in prototyping some new ideas. Until now events could influence the resource count or add hints. Now events may also add (or remove) so called tags to all the tiles in a specific radius from the tile that the party is on. These tags are just strings and don't have any significance by themselves, but the tag names can now be used as preconditions for other events or actions.

Here are some new effects that I added using the tag system:

Raiding ruins now makes nearby villages hostile towards the player group. He may no longer do actions in the village and he might also be attacked randomly by natives while in the area.

Raiding temples may now curse the party. While in the area this will randomly turn porters crazy. Also it makes every water resource nearby become poisoned.

With all the new events, the config.js will become pretty big. There will probably be a point where it will be necessary to implement a basic editor to manage all the events and actions. Not sure when the right time for this would be. Let me know what you think.



That's crazy.
I LOVE it.

JUNE 10TH, 2012
POSTED BY RIAD



Rivers

It's now possible to refill water when standing next to a river tile

Made river unpassable (set effort to -1)

Added support for event actions

Events support follow-up actions (use actions array in the event entry)

Added sanity system

Porters with too little sanity can't be used for actions

Deaths and injuries reduce sanity

Skill success and general time increase sanity

(Not super sure about it, just trying out how it feels)

Tracking

Moved tracking out of diary block and onto game board

Removed XP and added fame instead

Fame is for whole group instead of individual members

Could be used for high scores



Mind blowing progress. Shooting out some feedback:

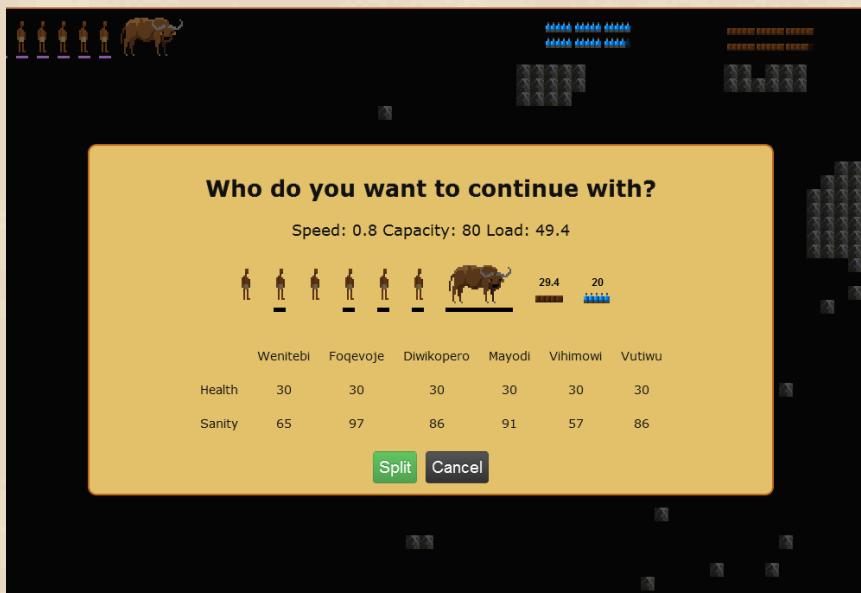
- I really need to do some mockups of the mission screens
- We'll want to give an overview of what has changed after a mission was successful or not. So not only how much water / food / gold whatever was collected, but also give info about what skills / stamina / sanity values changed for the individual porters.
- Dragging the map with the left mouse button is really not a good idea since this leads to accidental movement. Dragging with the right mouse button is a chore since it always makes the context menu pop up. Can we disable this menu? Also, I'd love to do a unique mouse cursor and hand cursor (when holding down r mouse button)
- We'll need to map the display of the resources to a % value rather than reflecting to 'real' numbers with the icons. This will allow us to tune the numbers independently from screen estate.
- Can we have general events that have a certain % to happen when a porters sanity is below x? Like him going on a rampage or something..
- It would be super helpful to have icons that indicate off-screen stuff, such as a HintArea or a discovered village



- 1) i think we can go back to the group shot idea here. instead of clicking the porter icons, you directly select the columns of the row. over the table is a image of the group sitting at the campfire or fitting to the current surroundings. Great opportunity for a mood shot.

- 2) yes
- 3) I disabled fast traveling if mouse is scrolling.
- 4) Not sure I agree with this one. I feel like the absolute values are important
- 5) Sure, putting it on my list.
- 6) Agreed for final game, but not sure about prio. I usually just zoom out to see what is going on.
- 7) Cool
- 8) If we make them unpassable, I guess you're right.

JULY 22ND, 2012
POSTED BY RIAD



Added camping/merging actions

You can select which porters, animals, resources should stay on the trek. Moving into a tile with a camp allows to merge the party again

Added animals/vehicles

For testing a bison is part of the default party

Added a new config structure to define properties of vehicles

Added weight and capacity properties also to porters

Amount of resources the party can carry is now restricted by its members

Extended health system

Injured porters now again lose health until they die

Healing porters will not restore the health instantly, but instead put them into a recovering state where they increase health every turn instead of losing it (until they are injured again)

Porters that are suffering that are in a injured non-recovering state now have a small red dot on top of their icon

Added a cancel button to actions dialogues

JULY 10TH, 2013
POSTED BY RIAD



I activated the new biome generation in the game

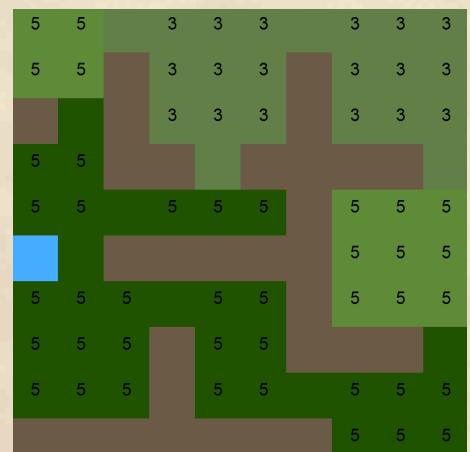
Every biome now has a difficulty range associated with it

The screenshot shows an example of the difficulty distribution on the board. Basically shorter paths have harder biomes and longer paths have easier biomes

Added a thick jungle and sea biome

Outcommented the cave biome because it will need special treatment imho

Removed the alwaysKnows flag from mountains and made three times as easy to discover as regular tiles instead



AUGUST 30TH, 2012
POSTED BY JO



Game goal & session length

We still have a hard time with the definition of what exactly the goal of our game is. With Riad's latest biome generation system we have made a step towards making the Player's movement through the world somewhat interesting. Still, it is rather unclear where the Player is moving to, and why he moves there. Sure, we have been tossing the idea of „special temples“ around, which will be some kind of climax to the exploration experience, but to me this is still not enough. I have a couple of thoughts concerning this that I'd like to throw out.

Multiple expeditions

Up to now I have always assumed that „the game“ is one big expedition.

We've been talking briefly about the possibility of linking together expeditions, if the player survives and gets to the „goal“, but I think we never realized the true potential of this idea.

Imagine that the typical gameplay would actually be made of rather short expeditions, with constant returns to the „civilized“ world, where the player could use the gold he found on the expedition to prepare a new, much better equipped expedition.

Ultimately the player would have really long expeditions that take multiple months (gametime), but there is a build up towards that.

Voluntary canceling the expedition

Splitting the game into smaller expeditions does not need to be a strict rule of the game. Instead, we allow the player to decide for himself how much he wants to explore of the world he ventured to.

At any time, he can return to the starting point of his expedition (a boat, hot air balloon, ...) and take whatever he looted with him back home. Or he pushes a little further into the unknown for even more loot and specialist experience, risking that his whole trek might actually die out there.

However, since the rewards will get tremendously higher the further away the player moves from his starting location, the incentive will be very high to take that risk.

Expedition preparation

The preparation of an expedition should be the aspect that offers the strongest motivation / incentive for the player to (safely) collect as much loot as he can while being on an expedition.

We had this idea from very early on, but it quickly disappeared from my thoughts.

How about we offer a huge collection of super useful equipment, weapons, better trained porters, specialists, animals and so on to the player, but severely limit how much of that stuff he can actually afford initially?

He'll have to do a couple of „playing it safe“ expeditions, find more and more loot before he'll be able to take more than one specialist with him, or better weapons, or that piece of equipment that will allow him to get past volcanic areas much easier.

Also, he'll build up a collection of experienced specialists that survived expeditions that will keep getting more experience if he takes them with him again (provided he can afford their expedition salary).

Session length

I'm a little bit flirting with the idea of potentially allowing (but not being limited to) very short session lengths of down to ~ 3-5 minutes. If a player can just do a small expedition to grab some easy loot so he can finally afford to buy this new rifle we're in a good spot; especially if we see a release on mobile platforms as an opportunity.

OCTOBER 13TH, 2012
POSTED BY RIAD



Specialists have arrived!

They can be configured using the new conf-specialists.js file and are randomly selected at game start (for now)

Added event requirements

Events can now have „req“ set associated with them

The set contains all the requirements that the party has to fulfill so that the event becomes available

Actions are removed if the only have unavailable events

If the action has the flag „alwaysShown“ it will still be shown in the action list, but it will be grayed out and not clickable in UI

The supported requirements right now are...

Sanity within a certain min/max range

Gold/Food/Water over a certain minimum

Having a certain specialist in the party

The requirements and tags are the only things that are checked to see if a certain action or event can be triggered now. All the other auto detection has been removed.



Would be cool to have small character portraits for the specialists so that I could put them on the action buttons that are only available to a specific specialist.

Also would be great to get a fixture icon for the super temples. :)

... and since I'm at it. A shield symbol as dice face. Could be used so that you can't get injured if you roll that one. :)

I was about to ask you for specialist buttons. I'll add the faces asap. Also, I'll do a super temple :-)

I'm all for new dice faces, but the shield doesn't click with me. I've had the idea of negating incoming injuries, but I see that more as a property of a fixture (e.g. camping when on a village or outpost). So the skull faces would be rolled, but if injury would happen it is „BLOCKED“ :-) How about that? Also - can we have little particle icons also for when a resource is gained out of an event? (e.g. trading)



I thought on a shield roll, all the other skulls could be ignored. No reason why fixtures might not influence the dice rolled. There could actually even be an additional fixture die in this case.. or the fixture actually replaces the die that usually goes on that tile. It would also be cool to get a different background image for fixture dice.

Would also be cool to have a mountain climbing face. Again something that goes from 1-3 to experiment with different tunings.

The trading particles should be no problem.

Of course there are also other ways to communicate the shield status of some fixtures. E.g. displaying a symbol next to the dice roll area. I think if you create the shield face icon, we'll have something to play around with no matter where we put it in the UI. :)



FEBRUARY 10TH, 2013
POSTED BY RIAD



Changes

We have hex fields now! This is a rather big change so there will some bugs. I still wanted to check-in early though, so that you can continue working on the tile icons and get an early impression.

Stuff that is not working right now (among other stuff)

Aggro Range not displayed correctly

Visibility algorithm not accurate

Fixture icons are not placed/sized correctly

Herds

Chance and enemy can be tuned per tile type (will also add support for biome/pocket distinction)

Arena

Multiple enemies can be on one field now.

Next

Fixing hex field bugs

Adding rivalry / countdown mechanic

Help Needed

Need missing hex tile icons and variations.

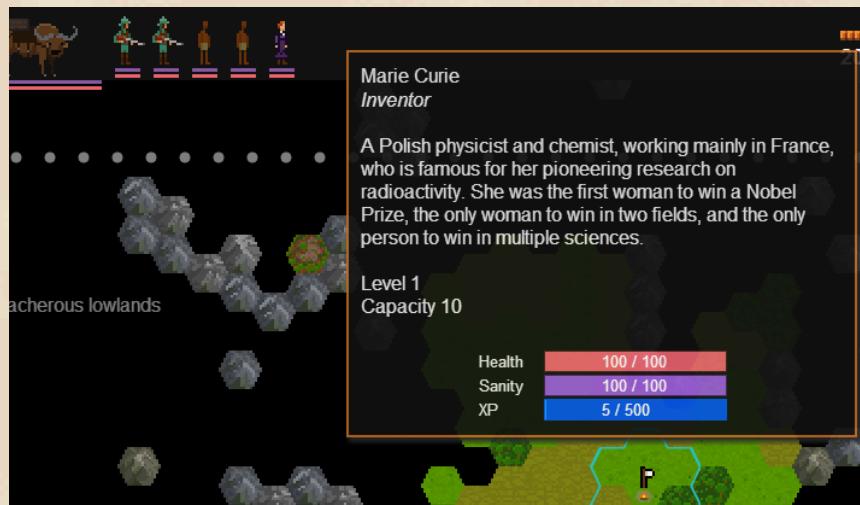
Fixtures should also be moved to the new icon format



OMG that was quick!
I'll try to fix all the fixture and other graphics problems asap.

I changed the fixtures to now also work within the current 32x36 sizes; however, after adjusting the values in the config file and updating the image I do not see any fixtures at all anymore...I'm not sure what I did wrong.

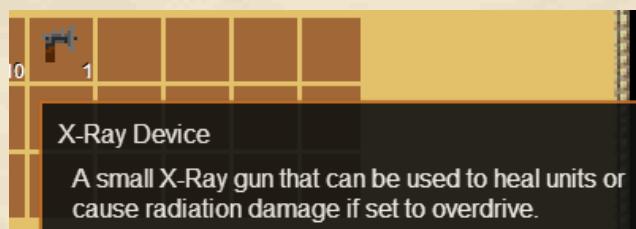
APRIL 9TH, 2013
POSTED BY JO



Added Marie Curie to the playable specialists.

She carries a small X-Ray Device which allows her to heal friendly units as well as damage enemies in close range. However, this device will slightly damage her health every time it is used.

Also, it consumes batteries. But as long as you find shallow water, you can refill those with electric eel.



JULY 10TH, 2013
POSTED BY RIAD



There is now a party context which allows to reduce the number of persons currently participating in the event. I have a test event set up with a claustrophobia status.

Trying a layout which has the party line up closer to the event box. Not really happy with it, but I think it's an interesting direction of associating the party more with the current event. Just from perception it makes a huge difference I think.

Improved the placing of various info boxes.

Fixed: Game is finished when no specialists are left.

Retuned the view cost to be a middle ground between the old and new tuning settings.



I combined our ideas from the last meet-up and added some more risk/reward mechanics. First are the rules for the paper design and later how this could be fit in the game.

Paper Design Rules

The players roll alternating a number of dice and try to get as many points as possible according to the following rules that are associated with every die face. For the paper prototype the faces are mapped to a normal 6-sided die.

Positive Dice

1 - GIVING HANDS (represents work, balance, patience). Gives 1 Point and can be combined with other GIVING HANDS (summing up the points of all GIVING HANDS)

2 - GIVING HANDS X 3 Gives 3 Points. Can be combined with other GIVING HANDS.

3 - TALKING MOUTH (represents leadership, teamwork). Doubles the points gained by GIVING HANDS, but only if there is at most 1 TALKING MOUTH. As soon as there are more, no points are gained.

4 - FISTS (represents violence, brute-force, aggression). Gives 4 Points. Can be combined with other FISTS. If one of these is in the roll, it completely removes the effect of any GIVING HANDS and TALKING MOUTH

5 - SUN (represents spirituality, superstition). Gives 5 Points. Can not be combined with anything else. If one of these is in the roll, it completely removes the effect of any GIVING HANDS, TALKING MOUTH and FISTS. Doubles the effect of the negative dice, unless there are at least 3 SUNS in the roll.

6 - RED CROSS (represents resting, healing). Has no effect, unless there are at least 3 RED CROSSES in the roll. In this case the player can add one more die to their pool.

Examples:

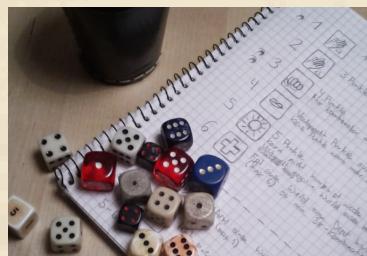
2x1, 1x2, 1x3 = 10 Points

2x1, 1x2, 2x3 = 0 Points

2x1, 1x2, 1x4, 1x5 = 5 Points

2x1, 1x2, 1x4, 1x5, 2x6 = 5 Points

2x2, 1x3, 1x4 = 4 Points



Negative Dice

1+2 - SKULL (represents injury, damage). One die is removed from the player pool if any skull appears in the roll

3+4 - CLOCK (represents passing of time). One time strike is added to the player

Every player starts with 5 positive die. In addition to his positive die, he always adds 2 negative die to his roll. He may re-roll a single die twice (can also be the same one for both re-rolls). If one player has less time strikes than the other player, he may add one additional die to his throw.

The player that has more points after 10 rounds wins.

TCE Rules

In the real game this would work similar, but with some additional complexity..

Every scenario could use a different count and type of negative dice. It could also define a different amount of max positive die

The negative die could have special faces like poisoning, destruction of items, or additional modifications of the rules (e.g. no GIVING HANDS allowed for this scenario)

The points are matched to the following event outcomes (just as an example). Depending on the amount of positive dice count for this scenario this could also mean that the best outcome is not always available (e.g. a small almost dead forest may not allow to gain enough points for a big success outcome).

Fail: 0-2 points

Minor Success: 3-4 points

Medium Success: 5-8 points

Big success: 9+ points

Every character has their own die face configuration

Leveling up characters could allow to modify die faces

Before rolling the player has to decide which dice to use actually. Additional die may be added after the first roll, but cost one time strike for every addition of dice.

Time strikes are represented as time passing in the world (e.g. half a day)

What do you think? Looking forward to a play test with you of this variation.

SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2013
POSTED BY JO



Uncovering a normal tile will grant the player 1 XP. I know we had this before, but I'd like to see if we can get this working with a tuning. It would be really good to add a basic motivation to just normal exploration, and this could be a very nice leverage. Surely, it'll make the rest of the tuning more complicated, but if we can get it balanced it should be a very nice thing. -- Something that would be super helpful is if we could define per field how much XP the player gets. For example, I'd not give any XP for water fields (they currently blow the tuning based on their almost non-existent view costs).

Tuned Level XP thresholds

Tuned XP handed out for normal and highlight fixtures

Fixed level req for melee attacks

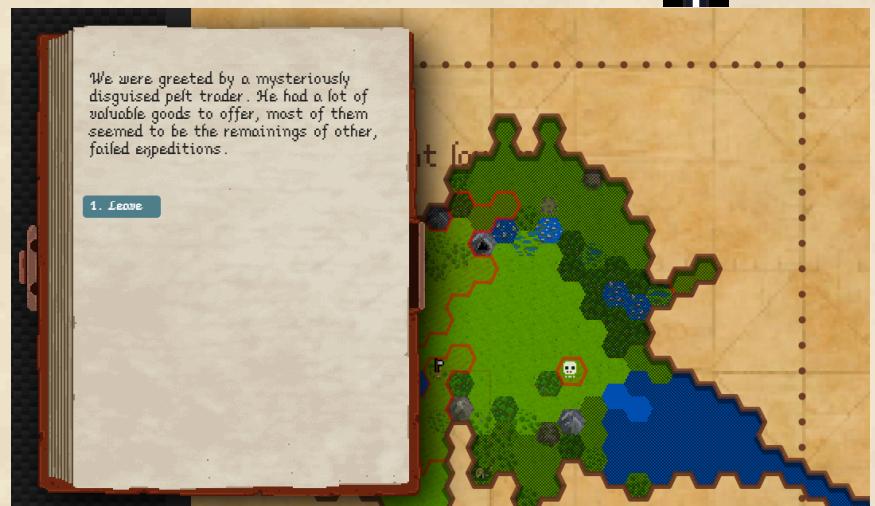
Added more level variations to the hunters rifle shot attack

Increased XP for Hyena and Tiger

Increased damage and health of Tiger

Re-added your beloved tinted fields. Actually they DO serve a purpose, which is showing how the sight distance shrinks during nights. I'm still not super happy with the visual impact they have, but I'll figure something out. However, this reminds me about an old bug - the view distance modifications for the daytimes seem to be broken :-v

OCTOBER 17TH, 2013
POSTED BY RIAD



Graphics

Updated style sheet to new diary

Added simple pattern background to main canvas (I don't think this pattern is very fitting, but it would be nice to have something better than the plain black)

Using Curious font also on the buttons. In general I would like to remove the normal font as much as possible, since it looks so unstyled. I think it would be cool to have a new low-res font for these areas.

Fixed found particles are not spawned at once, but in an interval which can be configured using the timeSteps property in the particle config.

Renamed tile.level to tile.elevation and reduced sight power of hills

Art Requests

A simple button background image so that we can replace the modern looking buttons by something more bit arty.

Would be good to replace the skull danger meter by our image in case we show it in a screenshot saturday.

Also would be cool to have different skull icons per herd to represent different enemy types.

DECEMBER 27TH, 2013
POSTED BY JO



We stood in the midsts of a vivid native village. The people observed us curiously as we looked around for someone to talk to.

1. Recruit a porter
2. Stay over night
3. Leave



First off - I have to say it is really hard for me to find a place to „put my foot on the ground“ content-wise. There are so many new features, and so many old things on the content side. I try to focus on the things that bring the most bang for the buck, but this is really hard right now. I'd like to work on general tunings, but for now the biggest problems seem to be in the meaning of fixtures (as you have outlined in your doc) - do I wanna tackle those for now, with villages first.

I completely emptied to village.conf file. It is stripped bare to one very generic village version now. I stored the old village content in village.conf_old

The new generic village is now something much more positive to find for the player.

There is a chance to get a welcoming present the first time you enter a village

You can recruit porters for free in a village. However, if they refuse to come the option goes away. You may still force one villager to join you, but this will turn to village angry.

If you try to recruit a villager and have a treasure in your inventory, there is a certain chance that the villagers demand to hand over the treasure. If you do not accept this, a fight will emerge. The win event does not seem to work for some reason :-(

You can also rest over night in villages to restore sanity.

This is just the beginning for villages. I gave the whole idea of villages some thought during my vacation, and have a pretty good idea what I'd like to achieve with them. In general, they give you stuff for free, but it usually comes with a risk of locking off the option, making the village angry or them demanding something from you (mostly treasures, if you have them).

I'll keep working on this generic village to illustrate what I'd like to achieve.



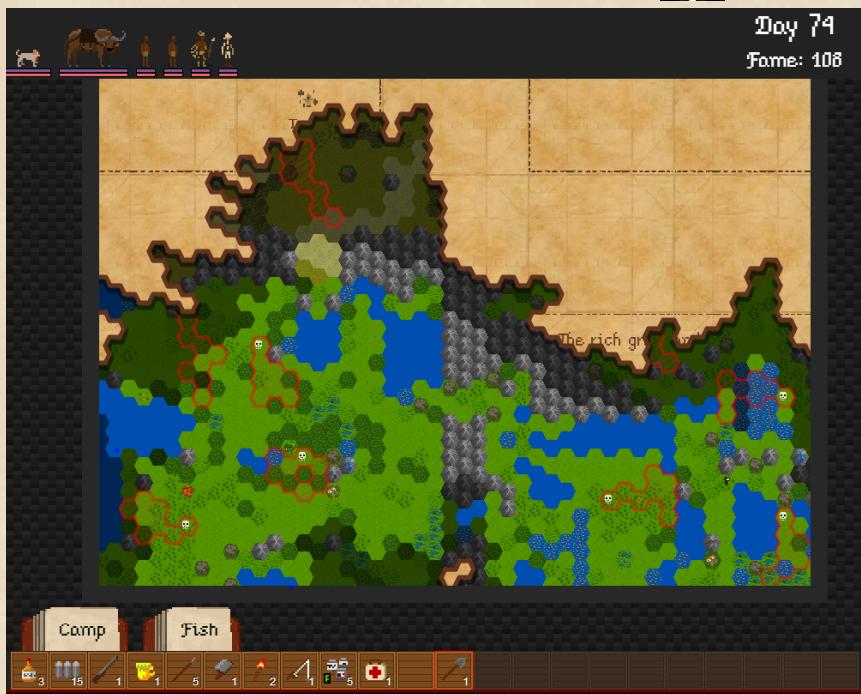
I think it's good to focus on specific features, like the fixtures. It's hard to tune the general stuff further since so many more detailed pieces are not locked down.

As you saw in my doc I'm all for giving the „primary“ fixtures a very strong identity and unique gameplay purpose. That probably also means getting rid of variations that are complete deviations from their archetypical gameplay role (e.g. a village that instead of helping you, attack you right away). It's something that fits the fiction, but it's actually too random and not much fun or satisfying I have to say.

So more positive villages and a clear role seems good to me right now.

(Having said that: there can still be hostile villages, but they should spawn as „secondary“ fixtures (meaning they don't take away the slot of a primary positive village, nor do they show up as goal) and they should have a different icon and probably a herd zone drawn around them.)

DECEMBER 30TH, 2013
POSTED BY RIAD



Inventory

Since I added the inventory grid also to the event dialogues, they appeared at three different positions. I unified the inventory system by putting it at the bottom of the screen, like in your mock ups. There is still a few bugs with the new system that I need to fix though.

I removed all the maxGroupUse usage in the inventory system. Its confusing to see an item not work on all the members of the group. I think we should approach it from other direction: instead of restricting the amount of usages per resource, we should reduce the amount of people per group. For now every item works on the whole group though.

Even more importantly I don't experience interesting conflicts from the current auto grouping of the persons. Its more something that I passively witness rather then something that offers interesting gameplay or conflicts. I would like to do some prototyping here. Maybe even trying out to manually set group compositions.

Travel Bar

I added the ability to extend the travel bar for a certain time and up to max amount of times as defined in the config file.

I tuned up the amount of XP given by traveling and tuned down the relative importance of fixtures.

Events

I added a new property „charEffects“. It takes every character of the party in random order and tries to match them against every entry of charEffects. Every entry of charEffects can only be matched to one character by default. There is a „count“ property which can be added to every entry to specify how many persons this entry may match though. It's not as complicated as it seems. The idea is simply to allow every event to run in person context.

Currently we have a mix of events with person context and without. If this new setup works out nice, I will unify all events to work in the same way.. no person context in the main entry and with person context in the charEffects entries. To be able to still do something to a specific character that is using an item for example, a new requirement type „reqTarget:true“ can then be used. This will make the system more consistent, but at the same time also more powerful, because it allows an item event to not just specify an event for the current person context (the guy that is using the item) or the team (using one of the teamXXX properties), but actually select different characters based on more complex criteria (e.g. hunger, status, flags etc.).

I also added a new sub property for the reqStatus entry. By adding scope='person' or scope='any' or scope='all' you're able to specify how you want the requirement to work. I added this new feature before I added the charEffects stuff though, so maybe don't use it for now. I would probably rather use the charEffects stuff to achieve the same thing as it will be more flexible and less duplicate work in the long run.

APRIL 8TH, 2014
POSTED BY RIAD



Belly system

Added maxBelly property

Characters with maxBelly 0, don't starve

Re-added reqHunger to food item, so that if they are not usable, they don't get consumed. Hunger is defined as difference between current belly and max belly.

Diary

The diary is now animated and swooshes in and out from the side. The text and the diary image are rendered in different ways, that's why they don't align perfectly, but you get the idea. I will improve it over time.

I don't like how jarring the transition into zone combats is. In one moment you're checking out all the new interesting terrain and in the next moment you're thrown into the combat screen. I've added a diary alert mode, in which the diary is on the side of the screen, alerting the player that there is an event waiting for him. Only after the player clicks on the diary, the event is triggered. Clicking somewhere else will make the diary shake a little bit to signal that the player needs to check the diary to proceed.

I've removed the step counter and tied the day start events into entering new biomes. Let's see how this works. I haven't played it enough yet. It uses the same diary alert style as zone events.

(I think I accidentally changed your start barter event text. Was not my intent.)

Intro

Starting the game feels underwhelming. We've been talking for a long time about a better transition, like flying in on a hot air balloon or on a ship. This kind of transition will require some heavy code work though, so I tried some smaller improvements for now. I added a simple star screen before the game and made some smaller tweaks to some timing. Not sure what to think about it yet.

Inventory

Made inventory controls simpler. Left click picks/drops all items. Right click picks/drops one item.

I added a simple trash can. Its the red rectangle in the lower right.

You can now click on a different item while dragging something and it will switch out the positions of both items as expected.

Camp

Cleaned up the feeding system. There were still a lot of different options in the system. Now an item is always fed to all persons in the feeding group. The item is always destroyed after being consumed by the feeding group. The item effects should not destroy the items on its own. This means that items that should not be destroyed by using them, need to be implemented as actions in the camp and not as something that is drag'n dropped on the feeding group. I think this is how we already handled it, just stating it again to be sure.

A circle is drawn around feeding groups on mouse over to help understand who belongs to the group and who not.

Only one item is consumed per click always. Removed option to drop multiple items at once.

Travelbar

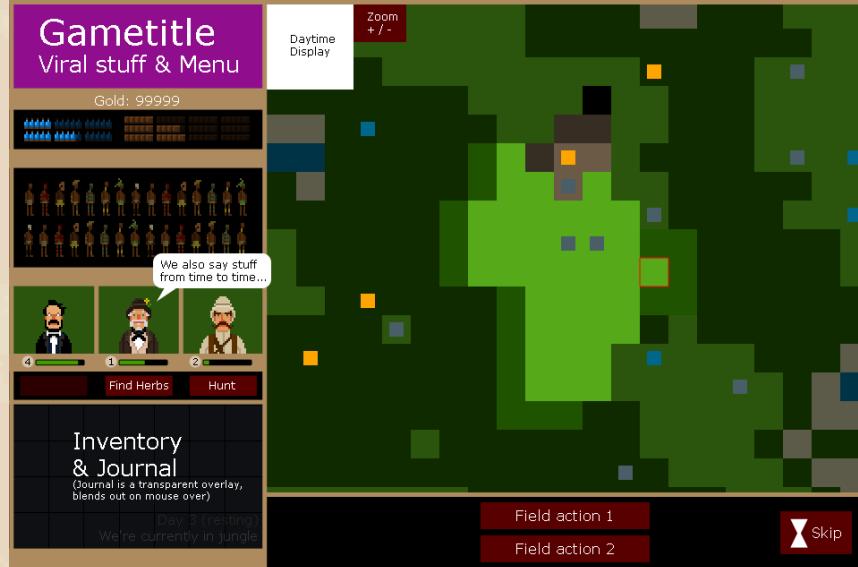
Made first layer of travel bar more gray so that white text is readable.

Fixed the sound for the travel bar. It was using one of the sounds that you overwrote, so it was constantly spamming the long sample sound during gameplay. I added back a separate sound for the travel bar.



LAYOUT EVOLUTION

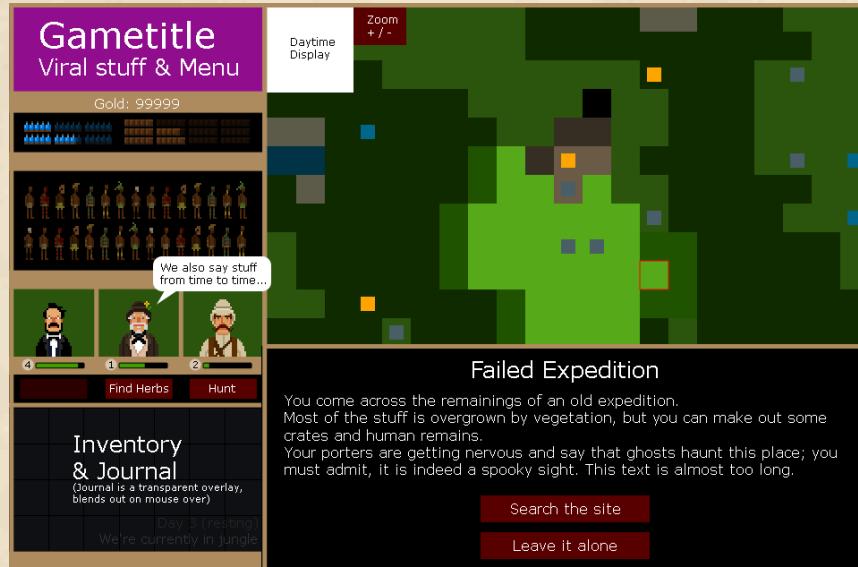
Finding the perfect layout was a long and ongoing process throughout production, mostly because of our iterative design process. New features were constantly added and removed, and the screen layout had to be adapted to these changes. The following pages show some of the many layout concepts that were created.



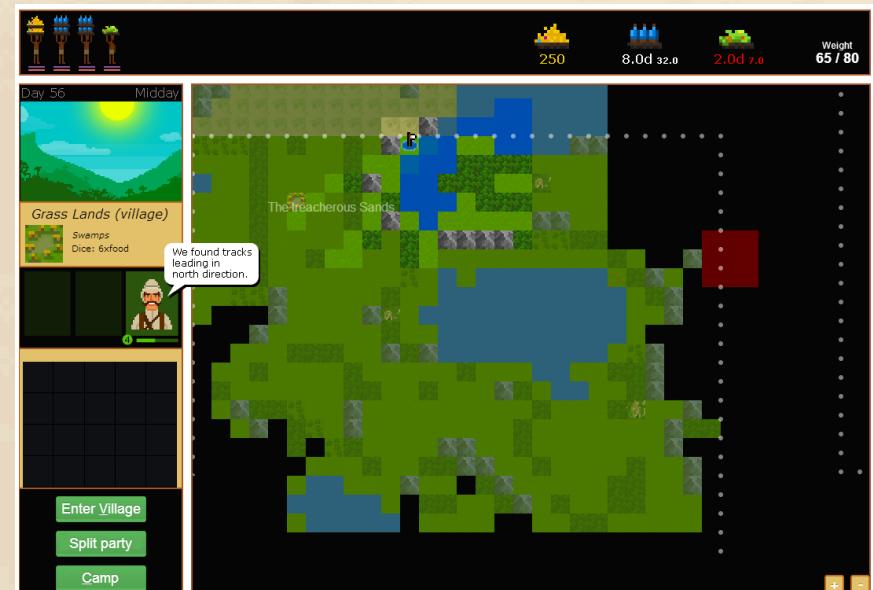
General layout - March 2012



Camp interface mockup - July 2012



Field event being displayed - March 2012



General layout - October 2012



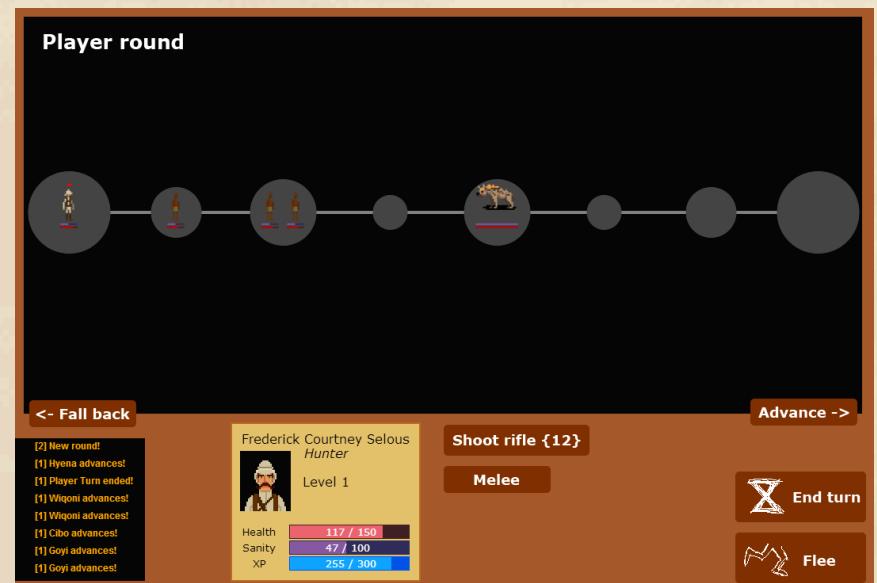
Standard map-gameplay elements - January 2013



Rough version of the event dialogue with loot - January 2013



Rough version of the camp - January 2013



Rough version of the combat interface - January 2013



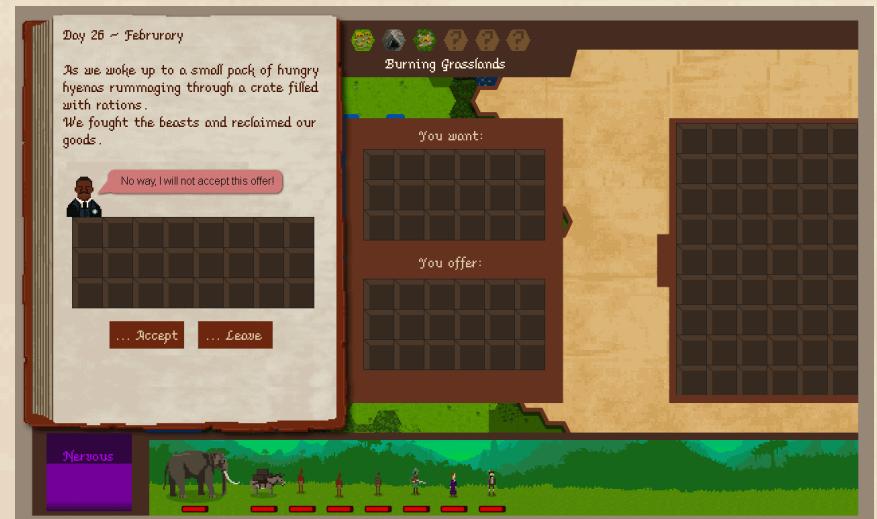
General layout - October 2013



This is how it looks when the Journal is opened. Notice that it covers the day display and the camping and tracking option; those actions are not usable when the journal is opened. The day is displayed in the journal anyway. - October 2013



When looting from journal events the inventory extends automatically to allow dragging between the looting and inventory. When inventory is minimized it can be „dragged out“ by pulling in the little brown area on its left side. - October 2013



Barter interface, showing the traders inventory and portrait. He could have different faces and say stuff, depending on whether the current barter will work out or not. In the center are 2 inventories. Top is what you want, you drag items from the traders inventory there to show what you want. Below is your offer. - October 2013



Very rough mockup how the interface could be shown alongside the event image
September 2014



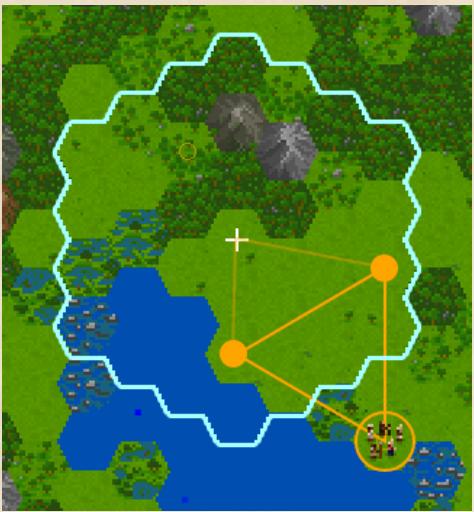
1920 x 1080 - September 2014



1280 x 700 - September 2014



No units in mapview - September 2014



ABANDONED FEATURES

During our production we experimented in many directions and implemented features that could have easily filled multiple games. Many of them did not make it into the final game and were eventually removed. However, some of them were picked up later in the development and are still, at least to some degree or as an inspiration for some other feature, visible in the game.

TRIANGULATION

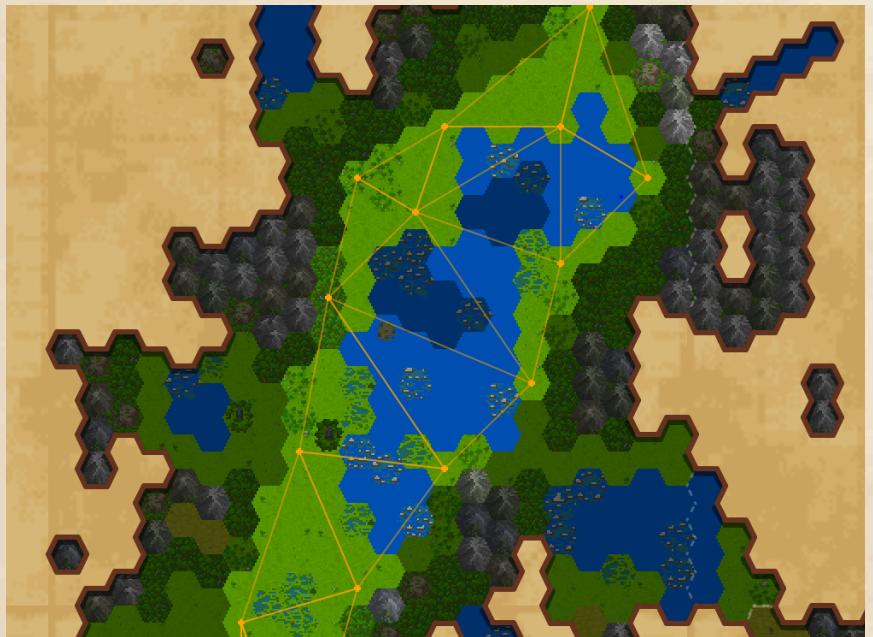


One of the most developed and promising features that was eventually removed from the game was the triangulation. Inspired by real cartography the player was able to mark locations on the map and form triangles. We loved the look and authenticity of this mechanic and experimented quite a bit with it. Some variations included that the triangles would award points, depending on

their size, which could then be used to uncover unknown locations, or level up trek members. Other versions had the map only stay uncovered where triangulation had been done, while not triangulated areas would be hidden again once the player moved on. While many of these experiments were a lot of fun by themselves and would have fitted thematically absolutely perfectly



to our game , we eventually decided to remove the mechanic altogether. The triangulation requested just too much attention and thought from the player to harmonize with the other elements of our game. Looking back at all the feature I wonder if we should revisit this one day and make a tiny game just about triangulation.



WORLDGEN CELLS



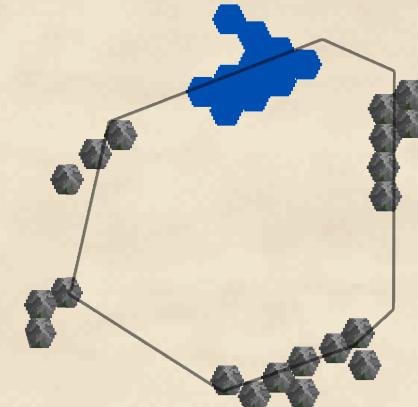
I left out all blocking fields like mountains or deep water:



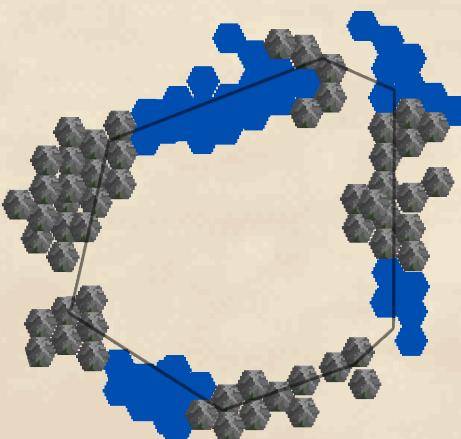
Here's my pseudo algorithm that generates cells based on arrangement of the field types. Cells will act a bit like rooms the player will move through.



Now blocking field types (mountains & water) are placed along the borders of each Cell. This should generate a slight feeling of moving through smaller, individual areas. Also, with such a structure fixtures could be placed more interestingly.



Stripped down example of how the blocking field types are placed along the border of a cell:

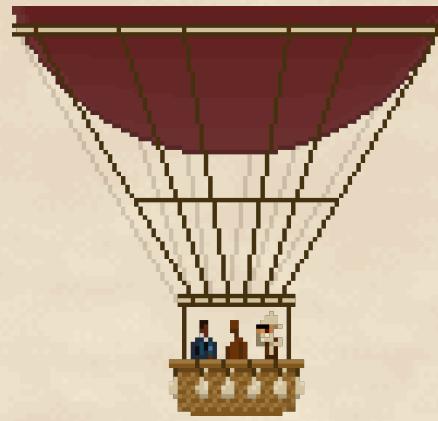


There are 5 blocking areas that were placed, with a slightly random density. The distance between them is evenly spread. This cell can be entered fairly easily from all sides.



Another example, same cell shape, but different setting for how many blocking fields are placed. This cell can be hard to enter or pass through.

HOT AIR BALLOON



We've been tossing around the idea of a hot air balloon sometimes, but I never had a really strong idea how to get it as a feature into the real gameplay (aside from using it for big traversals or the intro / outro scene). I think I found something simple now, which could work nicely. Because of our scale, using a hot-air balloon for a distance of something between ~ 3 - 5 fields would work. I've had the situation more than once that there was this one obstacle



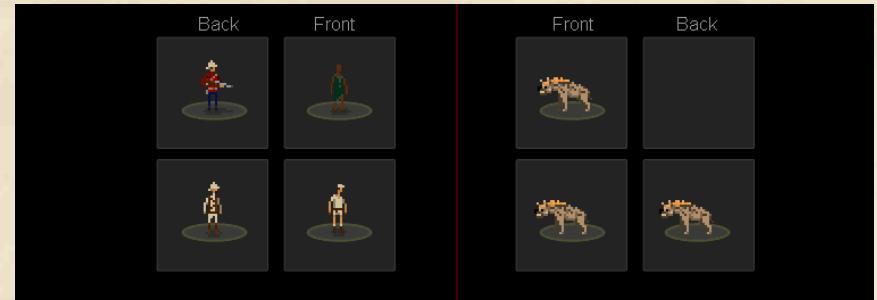
I could not get around and wished I could „teleport“ - but did not find a good excuse for such a mechanic in our fiction. Well, that would be a perfect fit for the balloon. Imagine that you can use a hot-air balloon (on limited resources) to „jump“ to fields in your immediate surrounding (if you can see them), completely ignoring any obstacles in between you and the target field.

In this scene (left), you could nicely use the balloon to cross that mountain or lake to get to the other side - it's not a super long distance, that would be hard to align with the normal travel gameplay, but a small jump that allows you to get over that stupid obstacle that would otherwise force you to do a super long de-route.

COMBAT DESIGN: POSITIONS AND ROWS

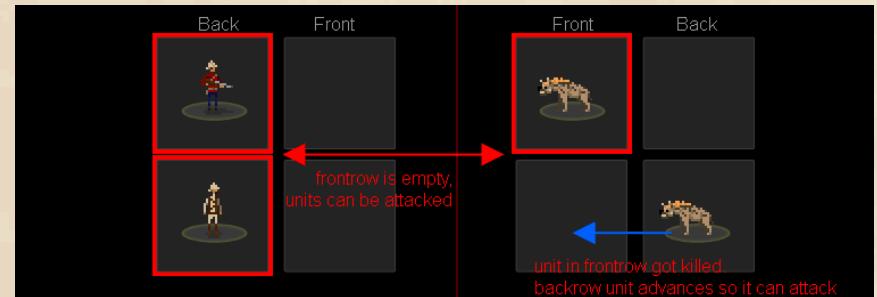
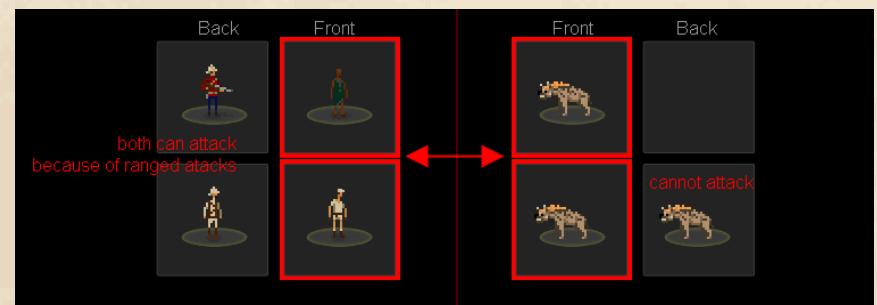
Setup:

- Player can drag in as many units as they can fit in slots
- The amount of slots can be increased with perks



Front & Back rows

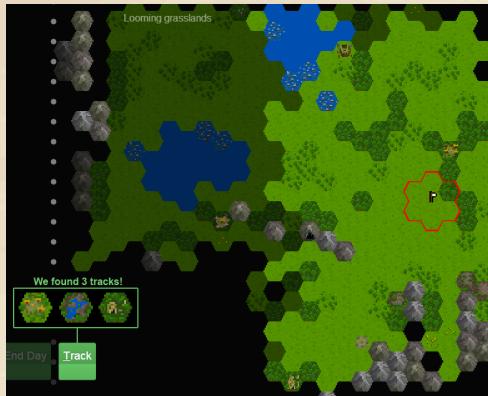
- When placing a unit it can be placed either in a front or back row
- Units located in a frontrow can attack the frontrow opponents units
- If a unit has a ranged attack, it can attack any opponent unit



TRACKING

I tend to have one problem currently - even though there is a lot to explore and a lot to do with fixtures and all, it feels too random. I don't mean the world generation, but my exploration of the world. Whether or not I find a temple or anything of interest is purely random, I do not get to choose what I want to find. I move across the map, and things happen to be uncovered. Obviously that

will get better once we have worked out the super-temple moonstone goals, but I still feel that we could do something very valuable here. I think with extending the tracking system, we could add a way for the player to choose between his options of „discovery“ within his current area, and add a choice to the exploration gameplay, rather than letting it driven by pure luck of discovery. Imagine the following sequence:



I press „Track“

Radius around my position is checked for fixtures that can be tracked

3 fixtures found

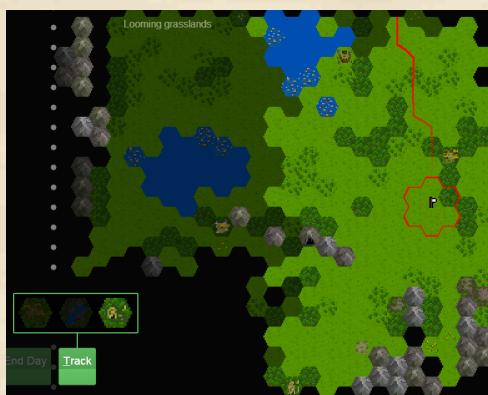
I get three options as a result of the tracking: A village, a spring and a small temple

I choose the temple fixture

A track is shown on the map that shows the direction to move towards the chosen temple fixture

My aggro range increases

The track blends out as I moved x Fields



CRAFTING

We've briefly talked about possibilities to craft things like rafts, outposts or even defensive walls for protection. I don't want to introduce another resource for crafting. Instead I would like to use the surrounding tiles.



Imagine the player wants to create a raft. In order to be able to do that he needs to have a combination of field types (or fixtures?) within a certain distance to his position. In the case of the raft, the player needs at least one field with wood (the Jungle) and one field with water to put the raft on once it's finished.

Now the player can build a raft. The construction should take some time (at least a day) and additional food & water resources. Once the raft is finished it will be placed on the nearest water field, and the jungle is chopped down.

The player can move on the raft and ride on it through the water. When leaving the raft it stays at the last water tile and can be used at any time again.



Another example:

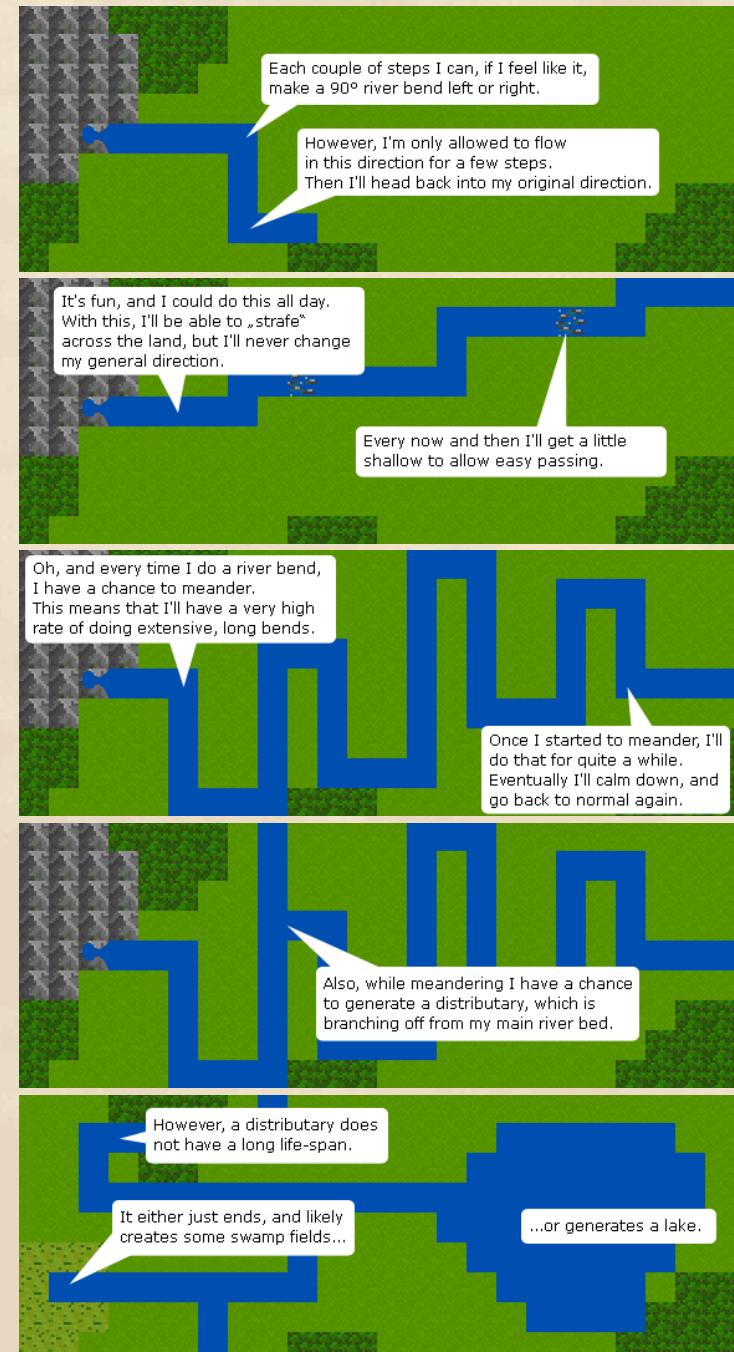
The player wants to create an outpost. He needs at least 2 wood fields, 1 grasslands and 1 mountain.



At this position the player can create an outpost. This will consume the two wood fields and add the outpost at the players location.

RIVERS

Rivers have been a heavily discussed aspect of our world generation for almost the entire production. While they would have added authenticity and a wide range of interesting gameplay options, their uniqueness in relation to the rest of the world generation ultimately led to them not being implemented. They have been a running internal joke ever since.





MOMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Developing a game takes time and can be a demanding process. One of the hardest things is to stay on track and keep believing in your game. The urge to start over or continuously question the quality of your work and the success of the final outcome can take a huge toll on your motivation and mental well being. We were lucky to many special and positive moments throughout the whole development of *The Curious Expedition*. Sometimes it can be small things like a kind tweet of a fan, a great Let's play or just an idea or experiment we did that never really made it into the game. While we were working very hard and focused all our attention on the game, we still somehow managed to allow us for some breathing space and notice and enjoy these bright moments.

VOXEL EXPERIMENTS

Initially we thought that eventually we would switch to Unity or a „proper“ engine before we‘d finish the game. This uncertainty also included a side glance at possible different art styles. Around June 2012 we did some rough tests with Voxels, which were the most promising artistic side steps we did back then.



Even though the Voxel experiments showed promise we ultimately decided against a switch to 3D. It was tempting (and still is today) to go down that road, the decision to not do it was a good one. It is very likely that the added complexity and workload would have derailed and risked the whole game.

UPDATE VIDEO OUTTAKES

One major feature of almost every early access update were our videos, in which we played the game to show and discuss the new aspects and features there were added to the new version. Initially these videos only showed footage from The Curious Expedition, but over time we more and more put ourselves in front of the camera. We wanted to show that there are real people behind each game, and how deeply we cared for both the game we were working on and the our community.



#FEMCRUNCH



Relatively early in development we made an effort to even out the gender ratio of our player characters. We called it a #Femcrunch and wrote a small blogpost about it, which you can read in its original form on the right page. This effort was received extremely well both by our existing fans and some press outlets, and eventually even got noticed and mentioned by Anita Sarkeesian,

who inspired the initial push towards equality. Initially my biggest worry was that I would not find enough female personalities that would fit the role of an explorer in our game, but soon was proven wrong by the massive amounts of references our community would send us. In addition, some of the added female explorer graphics were even contributed by a community member.

When we initially thought about our game we had a lot of ideas for special explorers that would be chosen by the player at the beginning of each expedition alongside normal units and starting equipment. Those explorers, famous personalities of the 19th century like Nikola Tesla or Charles Darwin would practically act like a class in a RPG. Each would offer varying options and play styles throughout an expedition, supplementing our roguelike-like approach of high replayability and a wide range of possible player expression. Soon after we started writing about this feature on our TIG DevLog, people started to recommend various personalities, and called us out on our lack of female explorers. Since then we talked a lot about it, collected references and wikipedia links to famous female explorers, but up to now have only managed to actually implement only one female explorer, Marie S. Curie. Being employed in the AAA industry for quite some time and knowing about it's rather tainted perspective on female protagonists in games, I've been following the development of Anita Sarkeesian Kickstarter campaign, as well as the resulting videos about Tropes vs. Women in games. The last episode called Ms. Male Character was in my opinion exceptionally well made, and offered a lot of very applicable suggestions for game developers to add meaningful female protagonists to their games.

Even though I felt that we somehow had the issue on our map, and did a good

job in the portrayal with Curie as our first female explorer (no bow, phew), I felt bad after watching Sarkeesian's latest episode. Sure we are still very early in the creation of our game, but still, the ratio was already embarrassing - currently there are 7 male explorers vs. 1 female explorer; our Curie is a Smurfette. In addition to that, almost all the male explorers have their own, characteristic voice lines, whereas Curie has none. So what I'm going to do is a Femcrunch! A Femcrunch is a period in development that is solely dedicated to improving the presence and portrayal of female protagonists in a game. And here's how I will do it:

Each of the following weeks I'm going to create one female explorer with a portrait and at least one characteristic voice line. I'm going to do that until I have the same amount of female and male explorers (This means 6 new female explorers will be added). I'll post the result of each week on Twitter using the #Femcrunch hashtag. I'll start femcrunching next week, beginning on the 2nd December. You can help me with this by suggesting female personalities of the 19th century that fit our game. Just send your ideas to femcrunch@curious-expedition.com

Johannes Kristmann
Nov 26, 2013



ALPHA UPDATES

During our Early Access we released an update every two weeks. For almost each update we posted an image showing most of the features we had been working on. These images, we called them 1Pagers, were a good method for us to communicate the most interesting changes and hero features of each update. We also tried to give updates a stronger identity by prominently naming them. Coming up with a fitting and in most cases funny name was a great joy and in general creating these 1Pagers felt like a reward for the work we had invested. We spread these 1Pagers through our social channels, most notably Twitter and Facebook, where they played a central role in our marketing efforts during early access. Sometimes we would release them one or two days before the update, and it was great to already see the reaction of our community on the new additions.

New animal: Camel
Stoic but reliable helper.

Feature iteration: Region score & unit promotions
Units are now improved by spending region points.

Dec 11 2014 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Dec 11 2014

Alpha #2 - „Ada explores the desert“

New world type: Desert
This harsh and desolate place will require all the commitment of your trek for a successful exploration.

New location: Oasis
This place can be found in desert environments.

New location: Nomad Village. A nomadic tribe can be found in desert environments.

... and many more improvements.

New Unit: Animal Handler
New Unit: Hunting Dog

New Enemies: Crocodile, Panther, Giant Bird & Giant Crab

Jan 21 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Jan 21 2015

Alpha #4 - „The curious die“

New gameplay feature: Dice-Game
The old combat placeholder has been replaced by a dedicated dice-game mechanic. Combine different die faces and execute attacks or other special moves in combat. Each unit comes with its specific set of dice.

New image: The golden Pyramid

New image: Stone circle
Pack animal variations

... and many more improvements!

New ambient sounds
Gameplay: Region information

Predefined starting units and equipment for each explorer.

Jan 02 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Jan 02 2015

Alpha #3 - „Reports from the port“

Your expedition now begins by visiting the local harbor and preparing your ship. Here you can recruit units or stock up on equipment. You also may encounter some special offers from strangers ...

Visuals: Moving clouds
(stay tuned for gameplay implications)

... and many more improvements.

New Unit: Cultist
Be wary of their treachery.

New Unit: Abomination
The master of deserts.

New Items: Tome Pages
Ancient pages with mystical powers. Use with caution.

Feb 11 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Feb 11 2015

Alpha #5 - „The triumphant return“

A cheering crowd will await the triumphant explorer after each successful expedition.

Many new Perks!
- Bullet Hoarder
- Dream Visions
- Lone Survivor
... and more

Angry Natives:
Losing too much local standing will cause natives to become hostile.

... and many more improvements!

New (work in progress) village image

New waypoint traveling

Functional volcanos

Feb 25 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Feb 25 2015

Alpha #6 - „Tectonic shift“

You now have a wider choice between different landscape types for your next expedition.

Improved Worldgeneration and irregular shaped worlds.

... and many more improvements.

Functional geyser

Thank God For Me!

Quick Text

Scaling

New Unit: James Sterling

New Options!

Use your shovels & treasure map to find more riches!

Apr 1 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Apr 1 2015

Alpha #8 - „Treasure Hunt“

New background images: Grasslands & Drylands

New special worlds: unlock them on your expeditions and explore unique areas with distinctive challenges & rewards.

... and many more improvements!

Improved trading interface

Magnetic mountains

Fear the world devouring void

Mar 12 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Mar 12 2015

Alpha #7 - „Fame or Funds“

You now have an overall goal: become the most famous explorer! Battle your rivals for fame in six expeditions.

Choose what to do with your expedition treasures. Give them to the museum for fame to win the game. Or sell them at the auction house for funds to buy better equipment for your next expedition.

... and many more improvements.

New Unit: The Artist

Units gain additional dice when promoted

Mission Stash

Improved mission storage and item delivery

Apr 17 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Apr 17 2015

Alpha #9 - „Artistic Merit“

for the night.

This night, the natives made our visit, and politely offered us alcoholic beverage.

1. Drink

2. Refuse

Increased value of anthropological studies and paintings to allow a non-disruptive playstyle

Improved text highlighting

Killing animals will now reduce local standing (instead of increasing it)

... and many more improvements!

Female variations for missionary unit.

Many new quests offered at the harbor.

Explore without required items at your own risk!

Improved inventory overburdened handling.

June 17 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION June 17 2015

Alpha #12 - „Unearthed“

Improved image for old camp location.

Find and activate the hidden seals to uncover the buried golden pyramid.

New actions: balloon escape & waiting

... and many more improvements.

New units: Tim and his dog Luis.

See Butterflies on the map.

Added new tompages.

Watch out for mosquitoes.

I approve!
Removed artist easel requirement and increased painting values.

Sep 8 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Sep 8 2015

Alpha #17 - „Explorer's delight“

Removed shading in long range. Uncover „?“ when in two fields range.

Health will now regenerate slowly. Be careful when fleeing with zero health.

Generous trades with natives will now increase your standing.

Feedback: see your race against rival explorers.

... and many more improvements!

Improved image for Mission location.

Improved image for Desert Tomb location.

New location: Raptor Nest. Find valuable items or dare and try to steal a precious raptor egg.

July 8 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION July 8 2015

Alpha #13 - „Dinosaurs“

New location & unit: Lizard people. A mysterious humanoid lizard race, capable of taming dinosaurs.

New feature: Animal mounts. Enjoy the comfort of mounted travel and use your animals in combat.

Improved HUD elements, including an all new portrait based unit display.

... and many more improvements.

Added many more treasure items with different values for fame and

Playing with A. D. Neel allows you to promote and improve your animals.

New side quests, perks & statuses such as sexist or pyromaniac.

Okt 1 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Okt 1 2015

Alpha #18 - „Procedural Natives“

Native tribes are now procedurally generated and unique every time!

Now on Steam: See and share a summary report about your expedition.

View all the items you have found so far in your Hall of Fame.

Recruiting natives now requires a good standing.

... and many more improvements!

We handed over the mysterious box. The was relieved that we had found it and st carefully in his bag.
We received 100 Funds to reward our



Quest rewards will now be given out in Funds.

New stonecircle variations allow you to uncover the map in new ways.

Move even when overburdened; at the cost of increased sanity

Okt 22 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Okt 22 2015 Alpha #19 - „Beyond the Portal“



Find out what lies beyond the mysterious portals.



See a preview of the most important locations before heading towards a



Choose between multiple recruits when leading the rival race towards fame.



Receive powerful blessings at a new temple location.



Added new Lizardpeople variations and classes.



New item: Native Trinket. Use it to improve loyalty.



Upgrade your pack animal capacity at the harbor.

You can now rest in villages without a translator.

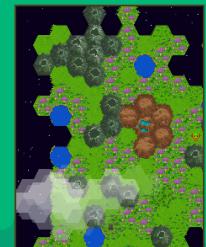
Nov 19 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION Nov 19 2015 Alpha #21 - „Friendship“



New final art: Thick Jungle Background image.



New location: The Shipwreck. Explore it to find valuable equipment.



New, beneficial teleportation worlds.

... and many more improvements!

Okt 29 2015 THE CURIOUS EXPEDITION HALLOWEEN Okt 29 2015

Searchers after horror haunt strange, far places.

New playable explorer: H.P. Lovecraft

Encounter paranormal visitors!

Fear the dreaded mummy!

Encounter deadly giant spiders!

Explore mysterious altars that allow you to sacrifice your precious equipment and loot.

Who are these ghostlike creatures, and what are their intentions?

... and many more improvements!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks by Maschinen-Mensch

Achim Fehrenbach, Adam Smith, Alexander Pieper, Andreas Suika, André Bernhardt, Anita Sarkeesian, Benedikt Meyer, Benjamin Rostalski, Berlin Talk & Play #11 Crowd, Csongor Baranyai, Darren Grey, Derek Yu, Dominik Gotojuch, Gunnar Lott, IRDC, Ido Yehiel, Ina Göring, Jakub Marszałkowski, Jan-David Hassel, Jana Reinhardt, Jim Sterling, Joni van der Leeuw, Karsten Härle, Leigh Alexander, Lorenzo Pilia, Christian Loes Ruesga, Magnus Hildebrandt, Manuel Kerssemakers, Mareike Otstrand, Mark R. Johnson, Matt Rider, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Michael Kuphal, Niels Boehnke, Oliver Eberlei, Peter Tscherne, Philipp Schellbach, Piotr Iwanicki, Pixeljoint, Rami Ismail, Richard Schubert, Ron Gilbert, Saftladen Games Collective, Samuli Pöyhtäri, Sebastian Mittag, Shawn Frison, Simon Felgenträger, TIG Source, Thomas Bedenk, Torkel Forner, Zdenek Mezihorak
All our players, fans, modders, translators, let's players and twitch streamers

Special Thanks by Jo

Odile, Ute, Jakob & Janosch Kristmann

Special Thanks by Riad

Abdelkader Djemili, Rosa Djemili

Game Credits

Alexander Batsch, Almut Schwacke, Dennis Kogel, Iris Schäfer, Johannes Kristmann, Luke Openshaw, Nils Ole Timm, Octavi Navarro, Project Gutenberg, Rafal Fedro, Riad Djemili, Tristan Dahl